THE PAINTER'S CRAFT

ROYAL CORTISSOZ

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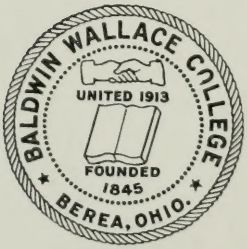

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THE PAINTER'S CRAFT

PERSONALITIES IN ART

AMERICAN ARTISTS

ART AND COMMON SENSE

NINE HOLES OF GOLF

LIFE OF WHITELAW REID

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

The Painter's Craft

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THE ARTIST IN HIS STUDIO

FROM THE PAINTING BY VERMEER IN THE
CZERNIN GALLERY AT VIENNA

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Cortissoz, Royal, 1869-
The painter's craft,

The Painter's Craft

By

Royal Cortissoz, D.H.L.

Author of "American Artists," "Personalities in Art," "Art and Common Sense," "John La Farge: A Memoir and a Study," etc.

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I

THE PAINTER'S CRAFT

I

THE PAINTER'S CRAFT

In the philosophizing of art it is the imponderables that prevail. That artist is unprofitable for consideration who does not have anything to say out of his mind or imagination. Technique, we are told, is "only a means to an end," and that end is an expression of an emotion, an idea, a vision of things, peculiar to the individual using the brush. When we proceed from the examination of an individual's work to that of a school the elements of a whole civilization are seen, even more vividly, to come into play. Behind the painting of the Italian Renaissance there lie endless complexities of the Christian religion and of pagan myth. The realism of the Low Countries has roots going down into the nature of a people. I never dip into the adorable art of eighteenth-century France without a zestful consciousness of the social movement by which it was so decisively formed and colored. In short, the approach to art means the invasion of many provinces and their very diversity may be posited as one of the commonplaces of study. Nevertheless, before the imperious claims of spiritual things, there is often danger of our relegating to too subordinate a place in the perspective a motive that is really of prime importance. We dislocate by a shade the significance of the painter's craft and

miss its true relation to our problem. Technique, in the familiar phrase which I have just quoted, is designated "only a means to an end." It is the "only" to which I would take exception. A word was never more fallaciously employed. Technique is far more than a means to an end. It is part and parcel of an artist's affirmation of himself and, indeed, constitutes the thumb-print by which he is ultimately known of mankind, an achievement in which he specifically exults. The man who has mastered his craft has done so, it is true, by giving attention to processes that can be measured and weighed. A craft, says the lexicographer, is an occupation or employment, "especially calling for manual dexterity." But who shall say where the manual dexterity leaves off and the mysterious alchemy of that intensely personal thing, "touch," begins? The inevitable commentary on that query is simpler than it seems. The ponderables and the imponderables in this matter are inextricably fused. To grasp the former is to lay hold of an infallible key to the latter. In other words, the painter's craft, allied as it is to "manual dexterity," is first and last an index to the painter's artistic character.

It has, incidentally, an integrity of its own, which is one reason why it seems to me worth while to talk about it at the present time. Certain latter-day movements in painting have nominally concerned themselves with principles supposed to make for better painting. The young artist moved by observation of

Cézanne, for example, worries over ideas of volume and the organization of color which he believes will give him a good landscape. But in his absorption he neglects to practise the drawing of tree and cloud forms until he has mastered it. Roughly speaking, the things which are implied in the word "technique" have gone into eclipse. The "self-expression" that we hear so much about frequently loses half the battle through its contentment with sloppy drawing, muddy color, and haphazard design. The drollest note in the ensuing confusion is that struck in the assumption that protest against such shortcomings is "academic." Was Degas, who stemmed from Ingres and believed to the depths of his soul in a disciplined technique—was Degas academic? For that matter, in crises like these, even an Academician may be helpful.

I must borrow from the memoirs of the distinguished American mural painter, Edward Simmons, an episode of his pupilage which is pertinent here. Before he went abroad he was warned by Frederic Crowninshield against the *chic* with which he was gifted, a possible resource in the future but dangerous in his youth. Simmons brought it to the front, however, the moment he entered Julian's, and painted for his first work a head which caused old Boulanger to say: "If you go on this way, you might as well go home and make shoes." When, afterward, the young American went to him in tears, admitting his

fault and begging to be guided, the master set him to making outline drawings! He was at it for months before Boulanger deigned to notice him again. When he did so it was with cordial approval and Simmons says: "I switched from being a loafer and *chiquer* from that moment, and realized that only by eight hours' daily work and hard digging could I become a painter. The next week there was a prize offered of a hundred francs for the best drawing—and I won it." All through the sterling work which he came home to do thereafter there runs his feeling for that early discipline, the same discipline that Ingres used to enforce upon his disciples: "Draw purely, but with largeness. Purity and largeness, *voilà le dessin, voilà l'art.*"

I use the word "discipline"; yet what I am really thinking of is not so much labor as delight, not so much obedience to admonition as an instinctive passion for technical excellence. There is a passage in Vasari that I love for its illustration of this sacred ardor in the pursuit of a craft. He is speaking of the transition from tempera to the modern method, of the abandonment in Flanders of the old egg medium for that of linseed-oil, and, telling how Antonello da Messina brought the good news into Italy, he says:

This manner of painting kindles the pigments and nothing else is needed save diligence and devotion, because the oil in itself softens and sweetens the col-

ors and renders them the more delicate and more easily blended than do the other mediums. While the work is wet the colors readily mix and unite one with the other; in short, by this method the artists impart wonderful grace and vivacity and vigor to their figures, so much so that these often seem to us in relief and ready to issue forth from the panel, especially when they are carried out in good drawing, with invention and a beautiful style.

With what gusto does he commemorate the great event! And how naturally does he associate what I have called the ponderables and the imponderables, the tangible action of the oil and the things that spring from an artist's inner being, such as "devotion," or "invention and a beautiful style." For Vasari there was no dividing line between technique and inspiration; they were interdependent and both involved the very essences of individuality. I like to imagine, too, the stir in the Venetian studios when Antonello got back from the land of the Van Eycks and rumors of the process he had been studying spread abroad. One can sense the enthusiasm that must have awakened amongst his fellows, the thrill with which each man realized that a new string had been added to his bow. I feel, moreover, that there must have been something warm, genial, something of the spirit, in that thrill. Wherever you go in the cosmos of true painters you find a peculiar sensitiveness, a peculiar *flair,* a peculiar *affection,* in matters of technique.

There is a profound eloquence in the observations of Renoir on his mystery: "It is not enough for a painter to be a clever craftsman; he must love to 'caress' his canvas, too. That's what was lacking in Van Gogh. 'What a wonderful painter!' people say. But his canvases do not show the light, tender touch of the brush." Renoir knew that craftsmanship was not a matter of manual dexterity alone, but a matter of the spirit. "Also," he says, "there must be a certain something that the professors can't give you—finesse, charm, perhaps—that can't be taught." For technique is more even than the thumb-print which I have called it; it is the breath of the painter's nostrils, it is the grain and texture of his soul, flinging itself upon canvas with the revelatory force of a gesture. Renoir's response to the genius of "painter's painting" is delightfully perceptible in what he says of one great exemplar of it, the famous Vermeer at Vienna. "I would love to have seen that," he wistfully exclaims. "All my life I have dreamed of going there . . . like Athens." To him a masterpiece of "caressed" paint had the appeal of some gleaming gem in a classic shrine. Your born technician is sometimes, like Rubens or Hals, a rather robustious figure, but he only expresses in more ebullient terms the enthusiasm which I have in mind and which with Renoir calls up thoughts of tenderness. In the case of Whistler, of course, who was all compact of taste, the drift is toward nothing if not exquisiteness, to-

ward that pitch of refinement which is flower-like in its connotation of beauty. Witness his words to those students of his who were indifferent to the state of a palette. "My friends," he would say to them, "have you noticed the way in which a musician cares for his violin?—how beautiful it is? how well kept? how tenderly handled? Your palette is your instrument; its colors your notes, and upon it you play your symphonies!" Only an artist who belonged to the aristocracy of technicians could have developed that fairly lovely thought.

Alfred Stevens, his brilliant Franco-Belgian contemporary, is full of the same solicitude for craftsmanship and all that it implies. Let me cite a few of the epigrams from his "Impressions sur la Peinture," a book which should be the breviary of every young artist:

On n'est un grand peintre qu'à la condition d'être un maître ouvrier.

L'exécution est le style du peintre.

Dans l'art de la peinture, il faut être peintre avant tout: le penseur ne vient qu'après.

L'exécution d'une belle peinture est agréable au toucher.

Les Flamands et les Hollandais sont les premiers peintres du monde.

Why did he utter that last sweeping statement if it was not because he was thinking that the Flemings and the Dutch were, above all else, consummate

technicians? The professional painter agrees with him, but many laymen, I fear, remain a trifle bewildered, and this is as unnecessary as it is unfortunate.

Technique, for some curious reason, forms a grave stumbling-block to thousands who are keen upon appreciation of the masters and long to come to closer understanding with them. Such students begin with a modest dubiety. They know nothing about the production of a picture and so assume that they carry a permanent handicap. Their trepidations are largely illusory. They admire a painting because it is well done. Why not analyze the source of their pleasure? Why not grasp the fact that painting is, among other things, a craft, and, realizing that many of its phenomena lie upon the surface, proceed to isolate and identify what has all along been delighting them? Their task will be the lighter if they will recognize that every great artist gravitates more or less to a specific phase of technique and excels so emphatically in the cultivation of that that *his* thumbprint is immediately decipherable. To change the figure, consider the technique of the painter as a language, divisible into various idioms, as we may call them, such as line, form, color, design, and so on. There is a fascination by itself in tracing one of these idioms through its infinite mutations. Observe, for instance, what has been done with line pure and simple in the history of art—its development in Chinese portraiture and landscape, in Greek vase-paint-

ing, in the profiles drawn by Florentine and Venetian Primitives, and thence onward through an interminable succession of individualities. Follow line through the rhythmic subtleties of Botticelli, the antique severities of Mantegna, the volcanic power of Michael Angelo. Follow it through the works of masters in the North like Dürer and Holbein, Rubens and Rembrandt, and then, on the teeming artistic soil of modern France, in the drawings of such diverse figures as Ingres, Daumier, Millet, Degas, and Forain. There is, indeed, no limit to the quest, nor is it soon exhausted where any of the idioms are concerned. Form, in its turn, will yield as glorious a company, from the static figures of a Perugino to the quick, naturalistic types of our own day, and so in respect to color, composition, and the sheer virtuosity of the brush the student may segregate those pictures which through their manifestation of a ruling motive throw into a clearer light the operation of this or that order of technical power in the entire world of art.

For I do not suggest, of course, that the "ruling motive" excludes idioms other than the one which the given artist often places in the foreground. Sometimes, no doubt, he does so unduly, as Ingres did when he made his draughtsmanship so superior to his color. The great germinal types are masters of all the idioms, balanced in a perfect equilibrium. Velasquez, say, is draughtsman, colorist, brushman,

and composer all in one—and an incomparable analyst of character into the bargain. But if the student will concentrate his attention upon the outstanding masters of the different idioms he will little by little make himself free of those idioms, come to relish each one for its own sake, and in the long run apprehend their functioning anywhere, separately or together. All that he needs to do is intelligently to interrogate the picture at which he is looking, to reflect on the nature of the appeal that it makes to him, whether of line or form or what-not. This will make technique more interesting to him and more tangible, more luminous. In a measure it will make technique a little more mysterious, too, but only in so far as he realizes the point on which I have sought to dwell, that technique is a spiritual affair, besides being a mechanical habit, that it is bound up with what is most characteristic of an artist's essential purpose, that its vitalizing origins strike down far into the deeps of personality. "Only" a means to an end? Can the brush-stroke that transmits an artist's mood to canvas, that records his feeling for one angle of vision rather than another, that is responsive to the pressure of his emotional, imaginative, and nervous state, be divorced from relation to everything in him save a certain "manual dexterity"? On the contrary, as Stevens says, *L'exécution est le style du peintre,* and, as was remarked long ago, the style is the man.

I write in praise of technique in this essay and in all the studies of artists that my book contains, because I have loved it ever since I began to look at pictures and because I believe good workmanship to be the very life-blood of art. I know that it can be transformed into a peril—when it is exercised in a vacuum. Turning again to the inexhaustible Alfred Stevens, we will find this priceless maxim: *Le cerveau ne doit pas se laisser dominer par la dextérité de la main.* I have learned the truth of this from looking on at memorable transactions in our own school. It was our salvation that American artists flocked to Paris in the 70's and later, but it was not all gain that we acquired there. Some of those travellers, like Simmons, came back fitted to execute monumental designs. Others returned whose sole qualification it was to turn out one clever *morceau* after another. They learned a trick of the wrist and nothing more. No, without brain-stuff technique is but Dead Sea fruit. Stevens gives me one last nugget of apposite wisdom: *Il ne faut pas confondre virtuose avec ficeleur.* The trickster will never match the authentic virtuoso. *Chic* will never take the place of hard work, of that I am certain. And I am certain, on the other hand, that he who once grasps the central principle of technique is started upon the path at the end of which almost anything is possible. I would exalt the painter's craft as a thing in itself right and fine, in itself potent, humanized, vibrant

with every conceivable impulse. It is a means to an end, but it partakes of the glory of the end—for without it the end forever recedes. It is instinct with all that a man brings to the making of his picture. It is an inalienable part of an organic unity. It is the other side of a golden medal.

II

VELASQUEZ IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS

II

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It is a critical axiom that to see the art of Velasquez in its length and breadth you must go to the Prado in Madrid. Nowhere else in the world is there assembled so large or so representative a collection of his works. It shows the range of his portraiture; it illustrates his dealings with religious and mythological subjects; it exhibits in "The Surrender of Breda" his treatment of an historic episode in the open air, and both "The Spinners" and "The Maids of Honor" display his mastery over the interior with figures. In the Prado you may even observe him as a landscape painter, anticipating modern Impressionism. Contact with Velasquez in other European galleries may be thrilling, as when you behold the prodigious portrait of "Innocent X" in the Palazzo Doria at Rome. He is overwhelming at Madrid, a master set upon a pedestal in unique splendor. Yet even as the status of that collection comes back to me in a flood of memories I realize that the axiom aforesaid needs to be adjusted to a certain perspective and I recall what John La Farge once told me about a letter he had received from our friend Okakura, the Japanese scholar, a letter written, appositely enough for our present purpose, from Spain. He had been

travelling with a party of his fellow countrymen, sent like himself by the Japanese Government, but he had broken away from them and at Seville was content to listen to the song of the nightingales. All museums, he wrote to La Farge, were the same; all curators were the same. "He had seen two hundred Rembrandts and two hundred more would not teach him any more about the importance of this very great master."

There is food for thought in that saying. I know just how Okakura felt. There is a gleam, a stroke, through which a great master reveals himself and there is no mistaking it. Two hundred Rembrandts? One, of the first water, will in astonishing measure initiate the clairvoyant student. One great portrait, say the Ilchester portrait of himself in the Frick collection, or one glorious picture like the "Old Woman Cutting Her Nails," at the Metropolitan Museum, will drive home a sense of his creative genius. It is so with Velasquez. The axiom still stands. But a distinction must be drawn. For the "length and breadth of his art," for the full play of his mind, you must go to Madrid. But for his essential quality, for the astounding play of his brush—which is peculiarly important in Velasquez—you can do surprisingly well in the United States. I say "surprisingly" with special feeling, for in my youth there was no question at all about the necessity of going to Spain to study his work. As recently as 1906,

when the English translation of Beruete's invaluable work was published, the catalogue in it assigned only three paintings by Velasquez to this country: the "Prince Don Baltasar Carlos Attended by a Dwarf," in the Boston Museum; the "Cardinal Pamphili" at the Hispanic Museum in New York, and the "Infanta Maria Theresa," which Col. Bingham lent for some years to the Metropolitan Museum and which now belongs to Mr. J. S. Bache. But all that has been changed. There were seven paintings given to Velasquez in the Spanish exhibition held at the Metropolitan in 1928 and these, with the works in the museum's permanent collection, did not even begin to exhaust the subject.

The occasion set me to reviving many impressions of Velasquez garnered here at home. I have gone through them with great care, sifting the unquestionably authentic pieces from the mass, and my notes yield a total that is, I repeat, surprising. Within twenty-five or thirty years there have been established in the public and private collections of America about a score of paintings by the master, all characteristic of this or that period in his career and some of them ranking among his major achievements. Some indication of the change wrought in the situation since Beruete completed his list may be inferred from a single incident. In 1912, the Duveens acquired from the Holford collection in London the full length of Olivares which for a long lifetime had adorned Dor-

chester House. They sold it to Mrs. Huntington, who gave it to the Hispanic Museum. When Holford bought it many years ago it cost him three hundred pounds. It cost Mrs. Huntington six hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Obviously a landmark in the cult for Velasquez.

It is, specifically, a cult for great painting. That is why, as the foregoing remarks may have suggested, the essential quality of Velasquez may be apprehended on this side of the Atlantic. He is the technician *in excelsis,* one of the great *virtuosi* in painter's painting. All the modern exemplars of painting as a craft, like Manet and Sargent, have sat at his feet and copied some of his masterpieces. The Prado is a place of pilgrimage for the young artist who would seek, first and last, the ponderable secrets of brush and pigment. Velasquez had imagination enough to function as a piercing psychologist; as an interpreter of character he could divine the nature of either a pope or a buffoon. Otherwise his genius was purely objective in its operations. He acquitted himself with only moderate emotional weight in the realm of devotional art and when he turned to antique myth he was the prosaic realist rather than the poet. Hence analysis of him is forever returning not to his ideas but to his method. It is necessary, as I have said, to go to the Prado if you want to judge the amount of classical inspiration he brought to the painting of, say, "The Forge of Vul-

can." But the technical tradition which it partly discloses may be studied on our own soil.

We are very lucky in the matter of his beginnings. When Velasquez—born at Seville in 1599—was still in his teens, he was placed in the studio of Herrera but left it, conjecturally, within a year, when he had been no more than grounded in the rudiments. Then he fell into the hands of Pacheco, whose daughter he ultimately married. It is from this Sevillan period that two or three of the most interesting of his paintings in America are to be dated. The Prado itself might be glad to possess "The Dying Seneca," in the Chicago Art Institute, along with another early piece, a "St. John in the Wilderness." The "Seneca," especially, is extraordinarily revealing as a souvenir of the artist's pupilage. In style it echoes Caravaggio and Ribera, but in workmanship it points to the almost academic discipline which Pacheco enforced upon the young genius under his care. The seated, semi-nude figure is drawn conventionally, if you like, but with amazing accuracy and polish. Velasquez was searching for "the true way to imitate nature" and this picture shows that he found it at the outset. He found it by virtue of an adroit and steady hand, and he found it also through the direct vision of familiar things that offers us an indispensable key to his genius. His "Seneca" is unmistakably an old Sevillan, just as his "St. John" is a young one. All the famous *bodegones* of his youth and early man-

hood are pictures of narrowly observed types in the human throng around him. How this everyday impressionism of his reacted upon his work in higher fields may be gathered from "The Supper at Emmaus," in the Altman collection, at the Metropolitan Museum. The subject is one of the most touchingly dramatic in Scriptural lore and Velasquez rises to it with a certain sincerity, a certain unforced vividness. The lasting qualities in it, however, are those of simple realistic statement, naturalistic composition, fine draughtsmanship, and, above all, fluent brush work.

The story of Velasquez is the story of that technique of his, rapidly growing in power and individuality. The lessons of Pacheco last long in effect and they are all on the side of a conscientious study of form and drapery, great simplicity in the matter of color—in which the nuance is less important than the mass—and pure, energetic line. For some years the distinction of line is particularly important in Velasquez. He draws with great refinement, great dignity. You feel it in the earliest examples I have cited and you continue to feel it in slightly later productions, like "The Man with the Wine Glass," in the Toledo Museum. That picture, by the way, has an interesting companion in the master's *œuvre*. It was clearly painted from the same model—holding much the same pose and wearing an almost identical facial expression—that we see in the well-known

"Buffoon," of the museum at Rouen. From details in the handling I would take the Toledo picture to be the earlier one and in general it strikes me as the crisper, more vitalized portrait. The linear idiom continues to assert itself all through the painter's twenties. It is markedly perceptible in the full length of Philip IV, in the Altman collection. But for the emergence of the magisterial Velasquez upon the scene I would commend the reader to the "Olivares" at the Hispanic Museum, which I have already mentioned.

Velasquez was still a young man when he painted this, in 1627, but by that time he had got magnificently into his stride. To perfection of line he had added a firmer grasp upon weight and solidity, and that skill in atmospheric envelopment which makes you feel that his figures are indeed living creatures, around whom you could walk. His color, too, is richer and more transparent. His blacks and grays take on the beauty which makes him one of the great magicians of mere painted surface. Criticism must always deplore the interruptions to the artistic life of Velasquez which were promoted by his miscellaneous activities about the court; but it must admit, too, that his genius received a tremendous fillip through his aggrandizement at the hands of the King and Olivares. He was confronted by more exacting commissions, more momentous issues, at Madrid than at Seville and he breathed a more invigorating air.

In our latter-day vernacular he was sitting on the top of the world and it must have newly stimulated him to put forth all his strength. The "Seneca" is beyond all peradventure the work of a pupil. The great, massive, monumental "Olivares" is as indubitably the work of a master. Thenceforth his art broadens, expands, takes on greater and greater ease and authority. He visits Italy in 1629, and at Rome paints those two luminous and lovely views of the Villa Medici. He comes back to work furiously and productively through the twenty years that are to elapse before his second Italian journey, and he pours forth tremendous things down to the day of his death in 1660. The fruit of those long, courtly years is unbroken progression in the art of pure painting.

We have evidences of it, as I like repeatedly to observe, in American collections. The old precision which we have seen declaring itself in his realistic mood and in his linear exactitude steadily persists. You are made abundantly aware of details of costume in portraits like the "Isabella of Bourbon," owned by Mr. Max Epstein, in Chicago, and in the "Prince Don Baltasar Attended by a Dwarf," in the Boston Museum. But you feel more and more in these, painted when Velasquez was in his early thirties, the power of creative evocation and the broad, rich play of the painter's brush. He is strengthening his hold upon character, heightening the appeal of life itself in his work, and he is practising with

increased elasticity and force that technical gesture which involves the affirmation of a style. It must have been not so many years after that Velasquez painted the portrait of himself which is in Mr. Bache's collection—erect, almost military in the stiff *golilla,* a thoughtful man, evidently dowered with nervous energy. At about this period, when he is approaching his prime, it is energy, beautifully controlled, that characterizes all his works. He gets his fact upon the canvas *au premier coup.* Witness "The Woman Sewing," in Secretary Mellon's collection, which Dr. Mayer has very plausibly identified as a portrait of Francisca Velasquez, the painter's daughter. I remember that when I first saw it something not only in the pose but in the spirit of the thing made me think of Vermeer's "Dentellière," in the Louvre. Then in the next instant I saw what a gulf there was between the Dutchman's patient development of his harmony and the Spaniard's spontaneous bravura. Unfinished as it is, this charming portrait nevertheless carries conviction as of a subject completely "seen" and endued with flawless artistic life. There are several other works here that point to this climactic period in the art of Velasquez, that period in his forties when he painted with a kind of exquisitely poised might. There is the flower-like "Portrait of a Little Girl," in the Hispanic Museum and, at the same place, the "Cardinal Pamphili." There is the stately "Philip IV," in the Frick collection, in

which all the manual ability, all the distinction and beauty, all the majestic poise of the painter seem somehow to be summed up. He is in these things the arch interpreter of corporeal truth and the very wizard of swift, supple technique.

How simple it appears to be and yet, actually, how mysterious! I have meditated long on the alchemy of Velasquez, going back to the Prado again and again. I remember, too, some particularly absorbing sessions, settling down in Rome to a minute analysis of the flesh tints in the "Innocent X." If I was defeated I have at any rate the consolation of knowing that no one, critic or painter, has ever recaptured the secret of the master's deceptive simplicity. He is baffling even when he is most fluid, most casual and sketchy, as in the late "Portrait of a Girl" in the Willys collection, which so delightfully recalls one or two of the types in "The Spinners." He paints, in that case, with the artless freedom of a man writing a note but the recondite knowledge of a master underlies the seemingly headlong stroke. That stroke grew more deliberate, necessarily perhaps, as he and the King aged together. In the last ten years, painting portraits like the "Philip IV," in the Emery collection at the Cincinnati Museum, the "Gen. Marchese Spinola" in the Senff sale, and in the Bache "Infanta Maria Theresa," he is all for a broad generalization. He sees his subject "in the large," as ever, but the touch is less fiery, more con-

THE WOMAN SEWING

FROM THE PAINTING BY VELASQUEZ IN THE COLLECTION
OF THE HON. ANDREW W. MELLON

sidered. It is a puissant touch, establishing the truth of forms, investing color with the old purity but with an enriching subtlety, implanting in painted surface all the elements of sensuous delight and yet keeping everything in the given work in a sort of grave equilibrium. Great painting, great technique, could no further go, the technique of creative genius. Its appeal is the more impressive, too, when it is remembered that Velasquez never allowed his dexterity to betray him into a sterile, mechanical form of exercise. Manual force takes on, with him, a positive elevation. His technique is lifted, as it were, above itself by his sense of beauty. One of the greatest craftsmen in the history of painting, if not the greatest of them all, he gives to pure craftsmanship, by his fineness and dignity, a *cachet* of something like nobility. The technique that made him a master has a tincture as of the soul.

I return to the point from which I started. The collection in the Prado remains unique. But the pictures in the United States, as I have chronologically surveyed them, are eloquent of the traits that make the glory of Velasquez.

III

A NOTE ON RIBERA

III

A NOTE ON RIBERA

One may get into a frame of mind about Spanish painting in which the predominance of Velasquez beclouds all else; it seems a case of Eclipse first and the rest nowhere. I was reminded of the danger latent in such a point of view by a couple of portraits painted by José Ribera. They were canvases of the sort that fills the eye and uplifts the heart of the searcher after artistic moments. One, called "A Philosopher," represented a handsome bearded individual in black, a great folio in his hands—and patches in his cloak. The patches may have been Ribera's way of recalling to himself the days of his own indigence in Rome. There was some beautiful painting in this portrait, there were beautiful passages of dark tone. The head and hands were well drawn. Altogether a rich, even stately performance, and one of the most gracious and refined things that Ribera ever did, a curious commentary on the rather violent taste in which many of his paintings were produced. In its fine simplicity it did something to explain the influence he had upon Velasquez. Alluding to Ribera, Pacheco goes on to say: "And my son-in-law follows the same path." You got an even more vivid sense of what invoked this emulation in the second of the two portraits to which I refer.

This "Knight of Santiago" had not, perhaps, the delicate distinction of "A Philosopher," but on the other hand it was a portrait of remarkable power. Velasquez might have made it subtler and more beautiful as a piece of pure painting, but he could hardly have bettered its force, its sturdy realism. The color scheme was interesting. Clothed in a black suit, with a sash of rose athwart his dull yellow jerkin, the soldier stood against a greenish gray background. A red note again appeared in the curtain that drifted across an upper corner. The tone was nowhere as limpid, as lovely, as Velasquez would have made it. About the *golilla* especially it was a trifle muddy. The blacks, too, were not as deep or as resonant as the great master would have left them. But the inevitable comparison was presently forgotten. All that mattered was the superb realization of the figure, the modelling of the hands and the certainty, the plastic energy, with which the face and head were drawn. The whole thing breathed a virile authority. Looking at this portrait the genius at the heart of Ribera's legend came back to the imagination with a new emphasis.

It is a curious legend. He was born at Xativa in 1588 and entered at an early age the University of Valencia. The learned profession for which he was destined did not, however, appeal to him at all. He preferred art, and soon passed to the studio of Ribalta. He is next heard of in Rome, barely keeping

himself above destitution by work as a copyist. A discerning Cardinal picked him up from his squalor, clothed him respectably and lodged him in his own palace. His origin earned him the sobriquet which has adhered to him ever since, that of Lo Spagnoletto, but as a matter of fact he never had any disposition to return to the country of his birth. A rather bitter saying on the subject is attributed to him: "Spain is a tender mother for strangers, but a hard stepmother for her own children." He settled ultimately at Naples, instead, and waxed in prosperity and fame. Velasquez saw something of him there and, as has been indicated, met him with a tincture of discipleship in his own bearing.

The respect of the younger man for his elder, for the friend of church dignitaries, of viceroys and so on, and for the consummate craftsman, is understandable when you are looking at such works as the portraits just traversed. I can't help reflecting, at the same time, that Velasquez must have been a little abashed by Ribera's religious compositions. Spanish and Italian galleries are filled with them, for he was an industrious individual, notably prolific. His *œuvre* abounds in martyrdom and they are blood-curdling affairs. There is a "Saint-Bartholomew" of his in the Prado which haunts me to this day like an ugly nightmare. It is amusing to think that in his earlier Italian phase he went to Parma and sat admiringly before the works of Correggio. Any-

thing like "Correggiosity" in Lo Spagnoletto as a settled trait is merely unimaginable. He adopted more naturally the tone of Caravaggio and, like that master of light and shade, proceeded to paint distinctly melodramatic pictures. The famous *terribilita* of Michael Angelo was developed by him into a sort of hollow spectacle. The tone of his time had a little to do with it. The public demand was for what Justi aptly calls "stronger meat." What the Neapolitan dearly loved to look upon was a thoroughgoing flaying, such as was administered to Saint Bartholomew in the picture aforesaid, and Ribera seems to have been instinctively moved to give it to him. If the scandalmongers are to be believed, he was a bold, bad man, given not only to intrigue, but to gross intimidation in the maintenance of his position against all comers. Fate handed him his come-uppance in his old age, when Don Juan of Austria kidnapped his beautiful daughter and broke the old painter's heart. Nevertheless, his career was one of amazing success, and even splendor.

If it rested upon his faculty for producing the highly seasoned pictorial fare which his patrons in Italy and Spain demanded, it was wrought also out of the resources of a true artist. He had a masterful technique, and there were in him faint reverberations of the grand style. He knew how to set forth a martyrdom with gorgeous stage management, and he gave his figures character, force, dignity. Dipping

the brush constantly in earthquake and eclipse, painting subjects out of his imagination, he nevertheless has an accent of truth, the movement and the emotion of life itself. The vaporous visions of Correggio were decidedly not for him. His motive was rather the tangible personality, the authentic human creature such as we have seen in the "Knight of Santiago." And he used, fittingly, a potent brush.

IV

EL GRECO

IV

EL GRECO

When I first travelled in Spain, back in the nineties, El Greco was a distinctive and generously recognized but not precisely towering figure in the literature of art. Criticism took appreciative account of him but did not lose sight of his limitations. Velasquez was the unchallenged occupant of the throne in Spanish painting. I can remember so well in what superb isolation he loomed in the Prado. El Greco played his part there and played it well but he was unmistakably a very different sort of luminary. Since then I have seen the difference magnified in divers quarters to an extraordinary degree. In my own time an El Greco cult has come into being. There was no sign of it in 1903, when Charles Ricketts, the English artist and critic, published his beautiful book on the Prado, the best introduction to that gallery that I know. He was in two minds about El Greco, as, indeed, were most writers on the painter. Then Cossio's work appeared in 1908 and about this time the cult began to function. The German critic, Julius Meier-Graefe, burst into something like hysterical adulation. In his "Spanish Journey," which has been translated into English, he says among other specious things: "I have found

a man, a great man, an inconceivably great genius: El Greco." His ardor is so urgent that it even leads him into disparagement of Velasquez. Maurice Barrès, in "Le Greco ou le Secret de Tolède," is fervid but intelligent. I might cite numerous other books, for the bibliography of the artist is extensive, but I need mention now only two. One of these is Doctor Mayer's magnificent folio, valuable for its text and peculiarly precious for its exhaustive collection of perfect plates. The other book is a brief critical biography by Elizabeth Trapier, issued by the Hispanic Society, exactly what the student wants if he is to make, in English, acquaintance with the facts.

It is as well for the inquirer to begin with facts and proceed from them rather warily for, as I have indicated, the cult has gone far in the exaltation of El Greco, enveloping him in clouds of esoteric rhapsody. We shall see that he has singularity enough but it is a mistake to approach him as though he were a demigod. If some of his biographers had been disposed to be mysterious about him they might plead, reasonably enough, though, that there are at least mysterious passages in his annals.

Who, and of what status, were his people when he was born at Candia, in the island of Crete, in 1547 or 1548? It is pathetic to see how one historian after another has been baffled by the matter of El Greco's origin and kindred questions. It is plausibly to be surmised that he was well-born and had a fairly

good education, for there were classics in the library that belonged to him in his prime and from that period dates an allusion by Pacheco, who knew him in Toledo and set him down in his book as a philosopher and author. But apart from conjecture as regards his actual beginnings and contacts we have pitiably little to go upon. All the books repeat the same scant details. We do not know his exact age when he left Crete and joined the Greek colony in Venice, though we may be sure that he was then young. In Venice he fell under the influence of Titian, Tintoretto, and Leandro Bassano. In 1570, when he would be in his early twenties, Julio Clovio gave him a letter to Cardinal Farnese in Rome, speaking of him very favorably as a pupil of Titian's. From this epoch dates a portrait of Clovio that he painted, a portrait now in the Naples Museum, from which it is plain that he was even then a competent craftsman, though not yet disclosing the marks of genius. In Rome he was evidently accepted as a man of talent by the Cardinal and others. His patron lodged him in the Palazzo Farnese. He looked about him and among experiences that left their mark upon him was contact with the work of Michael Angelo, then recently dead. Again we are confronted by queries. Why did he leave Rome and Italy? Why was Spain his next refuge? When, to a day, did he get there and what were the exact circumstances that led to his settlement in Toledo? I con-

fess that I am myself particularly keen on knowing more about the man's personal background, the good or bad luck that he had, the manner in which he solved the problems of daily living. However, in the absence of all that, there is still something known about the painter as an every-day human creature.

Domenico Theotocopuli—which latter appellation signifies "Little Child of God"—signed many of his pictures with the name that his parents had given him, but from the time that he came to live in Toledo down to his death there in 1614 he was known as El Greco, from the land of his birth. It was peculiarly fitting that he should be thus designated, for there was something essentially exotic about him. He seems to have been a man of strong character, almost rudely independent. He did important work for Philip II at the Escurial but it does not appear that he had, like Velasquez, the traits of a courtier. It is amusing to find how quick he was to stand up for his rights. It was customary in those days for a painting to be valued on completion by appraisers appointed by both artist and patron. Their ministrations, when El Greco was concerned, were wont to wind up in a lawsuit. He was nothing loath. Indeed I gather that he was not only independent, but even pugnacious. His fellows had reason to be grateful for his militant habit since out of one litigation of his there developed the liberation of the arts from taxation. A sturdy, likable man. Among the

legends concerning him is one that musicians beguiled his hours at table. It is consonant with the conviction somehow forming itself in one's mind that El Greco was, in the truest and most æsthetic sense of the term, an artist. The sparse biography that we have shows that and the works richly confirm it.

Just how he was trained to produce those works is one more of the puzzles in his history. The early portrait of Clovio reveals, I may say again, that he knew his trade, but how did he come to learn it and what were his methods? It is obvious that he was well grounded as a draughtsman but line was not his overmastering predilection. When Pacheco asked him which was the more difficult, coloring or drawing, El Greco answered: coloring. Mme. Trapier reproduces from the Spanish annalist this interesting memory of his visit to the painter: "Domenico Greco showed me in the year 1611 a cupboard of clay models by his hand, which he made use of in his work. And what was most remarkable, the originals of all that he had painted in his life, painted in oils on smaller canvases, in a room which by his order his son showed me. What will the presumptuous and lazy say to this, will they not fall dead hearing of these examples?" Mme. Trapier notes that while some fifty models of clay, wax, or plaster are listed in the inventory framed on the painter's death there is no mention of the painted "originals of all that he had painted in his life." Nevertheless, I am not in-

clined to take this as inimical to the hypothesis that he was a man of industry and of many preliminary studies. He must have had great facility. He was fertile in the production of replicas and variants. All the testimony of his work is in favor of the idea that while in his later period he was capable of fluent improvisation his art was based from the beginning on disciplined preparation. He knew how to model a figure, how to arrange drapery, and how to put a composition together.

If analysis of his evolution as an artist must look to matters of technique it must look even more to matters of style and spirit. The landmarks in his career almost immediately subordinate questions of drawing, brushwork, and the like to questions of mood. In his youth in Crete he must have been aware of the Byzantine tradition and it long reverberates in his life. Then in Venice he becomes Venetian. It is not merely that the types and backgrounds of Tintoretto and Bassano commend themselves to him. In the whole organization and atmosphere of his picture he is true to their sumptuous ideal and to the nominally academic scaffold supporting their realistic designs. He would build up a portrait in the true Venetian fashion, whether a simple bust or a splendid full-length like the noble "Vincenzo Anastagi" in the Frick collection. Titian himself, his master, might have conceived that virile performance. The monumental "Assumption of the Virgin,"

hanging in the Art Institute at Chicago, one of his great masterpieces, is an obviously Titianesque scheme. It was, in fact, with no small Italian baggage that this Greek came to Spain. But it was with extraordinary rapidity that El Greco found himself and in so doing became the portent in Spanish art that we know and that has developed the cult. Before characterizing this portent I would lay stress upon the craftsman in him to whom I have already referred. The Greco of the dithyrambic æsthetes, the Greco of the cult, the Greco whom the Modernists would try to kidnap as they have tried to kidnap Ingres, is the later and mannered Greco of the elongated forms who is often a caricature of himself and a negation of nature. He is, besides, a violator of his own canons of good workmanship. But that he had those canons and that he knew truth as well as beauty are facts important to remember. When he painted the prodigious "Burial of Count Orgaz" at Toledo he reared up a fabric as masterly in its way as Raphael's august "Disputa." The picture is divided into its two zones with the cool judgment of the academician. In the foreground of the lower zone the two saints, with their armored burden between them, are unerringly placed with reference to the figures beside them, to the serried nobles behind them, and to the heavenly host above. The great canvas is crowded but every figure, every head, is at precisely the right point in the design as a design.

The sentimentalists make much of the mystical and psychological power in the thing, its spiritual *élan,* and, to tell the truth, I would not say them nay; but I can recall now that when it first burst upon my vision long ago my mind went back to the genius of the Stanze for unity comparable to the unity of this. I knew then that El Greco was a consummate workman. I don't think he was ever so masterly a composer in any of his other works unless possibly in the famous "Expolio" in the Cathedral at Toledo, wherein he beautifully illustrates the maxim of Degas, that you make a multitude in art not with a host of figures, but with comparatively few. The "Burial of Count Orgaz" as a design is, to be sure, in a class by itself, monumental and unique. But let us turn from the splendor of that achievement and see what El Greco does in the generality of his better pictures. He makes them true pictures. The attitude is rightly fixed. Whether he be painting a religious subject or a portrait the figure is felicitously disposed in the rectangle and it has character. Above all, it has character, it is the vitalized expression of an idea or an individuality. Which brings me back to the portent.

What is it that makes El Greco one? What is his secret? What is it in him that seizes our imagination? Criticism makes various replies. His conception of form will appeal to one analyst. His color to another. His mysticism to a third. My own

hypothesis has long been that El Greco's secret lies in just the originality which was expressed through all these factors, that he touches us because of the rich response he makes to the craving in every lover of art for the absolutely unprecedented, new-minted artistic experience. You get such an experience sometimes from a temperament living within the tradition of a school, as you get it, say, from a Florentine like Botticelli. But El Greco is his own school. There is something uncanny about the self-sufficiency of this painter. Consider his style—and his style is as significant as his spiritual content—and you see that he spins his magic out of his own entrails. Though he ponders on Byzantium he is not a Byzantine. Though he touches hands with Tintoretto he is only temporarily a Venetian. He visits Rome and escapes all influences there save, in a measure, that of Michael Angelo, and even that he transmutes into something of his own. His pictures and portraits are freighted with the very soul of Spain, yet you cannot call him in his own soul a Spaniard. He is simply El Greco, an episode of intense strangeness and originality in the history of art. This is, I maintain, by itself fascinating. The passion of this changeling is sometimes profoundly moving. When he paints a religious picture it stirs your heart. His saints are truly saintly and when he paints a sixteenth-century cavalier or priest or scholar he seems to reach down into the very depths of the man's

nature and to pluck forth its secret. As he does so he gives to the transaction an accent which, I repeat, is absolutely new. It is new and it brings almost fantastic beauties with it. The colors are very lovely for all that a rather livid tone will creep in. The play of light, especially over landscape, is romantically arresting. How much he gives us that is rare and fine and altogether distinguished! And then he gives us other things which bring us to a pause.

Originality is a golden gift but it may be precious and still be of only relative value. Questions of degree and kind enter in. Ricketts has a saying which is apposite here. "The personality or originality of El Greco," he remarks, "is too thin, too whimsical, too arbitrary, to command absolute praise." I do not quite agree with Ricketts. "Thin," particularly strikes me as too severe a word. Yet up to a point I sympathize with the English critic. I remember how the lovely color, especially the grays and greens, occasionally grows morbid, and emotionally, too, El Greco now and then invites the same epithet. If his ecstasy can be holy it can also be merely feverish. In him the improvisatore will, on occasion, submerge the designer. The elongation of form which is persuasive enough in, for example, a picture like the "Crucifixion" in the Louvre, presently runs away with him and becomes, frankly, tiresome. As he drew toward the close of his career there is no obscuring the fact that El Greco frequently substituted man-

TOLEDO

FROM THE PAINTING BY EL GRECO IN THE HAVEMEYER COLLECTION

nerism for style. In short, "discrimination" is the watchword for those who would extract from El Greco the joy that is surely to be got out of him. For the collector of sensations he is one of the most alluring and repaying artists in the whole range of painting. But that same collector must be on his guard against the rhapsodists, careful to distinguish between what is great and what is grotesque in the work of the master.

V

GOYA

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GOYA

In the exhibition of Spanish painting, to which I have already alluded in these pages, held at the Metropolitan Museum, it was interesting to observe the penetrating appeal that Goya made to the public. He had, along with El Greco and Velasquez, the status of an old master, but he seemed to speak, more persuasively than either of them, in a language understood by the modern observer. Later a traveller returned from Spain confirmed with a vengeance this sympathy for the eighteenth-century painter. He had been poring over the great collection of works assembled in Madrid in commemoration of the centenary of Goya's death, and, with a large gesture, he gave me the measure of what he felt on the subject. "Two hundred years from now," he said, "I believe Goya will be recognized as a bigger man than Velasquez." It is a tall order, taller than I can compass, but as a declaration of faith it touches my imagination, for it points to the secret of this artist's genius—his overwhelming vitality, that imposes itself upon us as with the strength of a force of nature. He is one of the most intensely affirmative figures in the history of painting, almost artlessly dynamic, flinging his cards upon the table with a kind of reck-

less candor, an artist to his finger tips, but an artist steeped in things purely human. A portrait by him is unmistakably truth itself. His gallery is a gallery of men and women, a gallery of living souls. If he has stimulated painters from Delacroix to Fortuny, it has been because he knew how to paint, but his influence upon such types—upon a Manet, say, or a Sargent—has been due in part to the same thing that has so moved the layman, to an energy embracing other mysteries than those of technique. He is an exemplar of character and brushwork made one.

Also he is an illustration of the powerful singularity with which Spain dowers her artistic sons. We talk, comprehensively, of the Spanish school as a school, but the outstanding members of it are nothing if not isolated phenomena. Velasquez is nominally the pupil of Herrera and Pacheco, but the master of "Las Hilanderas" remains unique, inexplicable, a worker of technical miracles whose rise is itself a miracle. Goya has this Spanish detachment from everything that customarily accounts for a painter's evolution. He is not thrown up by a national movement, developed by a teacher. He happens. This despite his susceptibility to the greatest of his predecessors. Of course he pondered the masters who had gone before him. Beruete, one of the most luminous of his critics, shrewdly ascribes a deep significance to Goya's employment by the King, in 1788, to bring together the paintings housed in a

dozen of the royal palaces throughout the country. This affair brought him face to face not only with the Italian and Flemish treasures now in the Prado, but, particularly, with the works of Velasquez. These last so impressed him that he paused to make etchings of more than one of them. Beruete cannot speak too appreciatively of this episode. "The works of Velasquez," he says, "after a century of neglect, found their rebirth in the mind of another Spanish genius, capable of grasping their merit, and the only man of his time who was worthy to continue their tradition." Yes, but Goya was to continue that tradition absolutely in his own way.

He was of Aragonese origin, having been born, on March 30, 1746, in the tiny village of Fuendetodos, only a short distance from Saragossa. The details of his ancestry and early upbringing are hard to come at, for in the voluminous literature that has grown around his name the biographers are notable for their differing views on this or that point. On the whole it is to be concluded that while there was good blood in the family, it was on the peasant or small-farmer level when Goya came into the world. Whether or not it is true that he owed his start as an artist to the intervention of a priest, who saw him drawing a pig on a barn wall, it is certain that he began in modest conditions. Yet it is suggestive of some aid in the background, at the hands of a generous patron if not from his father, that he began

very soon. It is said that he was an art student by the time he was twelve. His master, in Saragossa, was one José Luzan, a mediocre painter long since forgotten but a thoroughgoing teacher by whom Goya was well disciplined in the rudiments. It must have been Luzan who helped to bring out his natural aptitude as a draughtsman. But very little is known about his pupilage and, indeed, the memoirs have a good deal more to say about his character and habits in youth and young manhood. He had extraordinary vigor and a quick temper into the bargain. There are stories of his plunging into the street fights common in the Saragossa of his day and even, in consequence, of his having to flee to Madrid to evade the clutches of the Inquisition. In the capital he continued his artistic studies, probably at the new Academy of San Fernando, and after a few years he is discovered at Rome, in contact with Raphael Mengs, of all men in the world, an oracle of classical convention whose antique wisdom must have puzzled the young Spanish realist even while it appealed to him. He looked at pictures and amused himself, dipping into violence, as was his wont. There is record of his entering a competition opened by the Academy of Parma, the subject—incongruously enough, for him—"Hannibal Looking upon the Plains of Italy from the Heights of the Alps." His talent must have by then got under way. He won the second prize. On his return to Spain he was fairly ready to range

himself, an accepted practitioner, thick with Francisco Bayeu, the court painter, whose sister he ultimately married, and presently given employment in the decoration of the cathedral at Saragossa.

From this engagement he went on to Madrid and in due course was commissioned to make the tapestry cartoons which visitors to the Prado will recall as amongst his liveliest and most agreeable productions. The rest of his life is a stream of headlong activities—incessant painting, sometimes of masterpieces and sometimes of pot boilers; excursions into etching which gave us, among other things, the fascinating satirical obscurities of the great series of "Los Caprichos"; social adventures without end and love affairs almost as numerous; sword play, the bull ring, and a slowly but assiduously cultivated alliance with the Bourbon dynasty. There is scandal in his chronicle, and he is, in fact, for all the religious paintings that he put forth, a true child of the quite irreligious phase of the eighteenth century. He had his share of illness, first and last, and deafness, too, fell upon him, but he was a sturdy creature and lived on to a green old age. He was 82 when he died at Bordeaux on April 16, 1828.

Though he painted some scores of devotional pictures it is not to their spiritual qualities that he owes his fame. When he produced his altar-piece for the cathedral at Seville, "Saint Justa and Saint Rufina," legend has it that he chose two ladies of more than

dubious character for his models, and whether this be true or not it is obvious that the picture is rooted in observation of living types of Spanish womanhood, not in any visionary conception. Life, in short, was his watchword. It was in portraiture and *genre* that he excelled, which is to say in those regions which permitted him to see and touch his subjects. The grim, even *macabre,* symbolism of the plates that make "Los Caprichos" indicate that he had imagination. But the biting attack of those mysterious designs, in which he castigated the errors of his time, is to be felt rather than understood, at least by our world to-day, and there is something suggestive in this very unwillingness of some of Goya's most impassioned work to yield up its key. Perhaps, with all due respect for his passion, the key would unlock no very great philosophical profundities. Speculation here only drives us back upon the central fact of his genius, his fidelity to the thing seen. Again I must note, in passing, that originality of his. Velasquez was a master of the thing seen but in the alembic of his art it is simplified, synthesized. The fact is translated into the purity and serenity of art. In Goya it is flung raw and bleeding upon the canvas, with no æsthetic *parti pris* to soften its impact upon our eyes. When Gericault, one of the great liberators of modern French art, painted his momentous "Raft of the Medusa," a tincture of composition as the academy understood it still persisted in his dra-

matic naturalism. Goya's breach with convention was far more drastic. It is a curious testimony to his inborn Aragonese independence that though he became a member of the Academy of San Fernando and rose to be its president, the picture by him that used to belong to that institution, "The Madhouse," is so little academic that it has the awful vividness, the shuddering impressiveness, of unqualified actuality. I remember the impression which Goya made upon me when I first saw him in the rich array of his works hanging in the Prado. It was that of an ebullient pictorial annotator upon the Spain in which he lived and moved and had his being. Not only national types but national life, its color and its movement, looked out from the walls. He seized this warm, human stuff with a ruthless eye, interpreting it with a touch as racy as Hogarth's, and—with its peculiar degree of directness—more in harmony with our modern point of view.

He knew how to pull a design together so as to make it picturesquely effective. When he arranged one of his groups for tapestry he framed it with the right decorative judgment. A picture of his is usually well knit. In "The Forge" he sets his three burly figures in a perfect and almost monumental balance. How skilfully he disposes not only the figures but the light and shade in "The Statue of the Commander"! Yet while he is lavish of drama, and, indeed, cannot paint a picture without giving it a cer-

tain emotional point, he is never melodramatic, never departs from the propriety of nature. When he celebrates historic themes, as in his two pictures dedicated to the bloody Second of May, 1808, in Madrid —the fight with the Mamelukes and the execution scene—you feel that he has not allowed fervor or pity to lure him into a trace of deviation from the truth as he felt it to have happened. The Parcæ as some artists paint them are more or less graciously embodied fates. Goya sensed the terror in them and he made them terrible, the bleak, ugly, fearsome dictators of mankind. He was *dix-huitième,* no doubt, and well aware of French ideas, but where Watteau, Boucher, and the rest were all for mundane grace and charm Goya unflinchingly holds the mirror up to nature and, as often as not, is evocative of the things of pain rather than the things of pleasure.

The same merciless mood accompanies him on his adventures as a portrait painter. Criticism discriminates amongst the three hundred portraits that he left. Beruete assigns to his late thirties the true expansion of his art in this field. Up to 1783, the Spanish writer asserts, he had not made "a single striking portrait, nor one in which appeared those individual qualities which he was to show later." But once his talent was unfolded it proceeded to operate under the auspices of that same temperament which we have seen animating him from the beginning—hot, eager, forthright, cynical, searching, with a kind of sar-

donic gusto in it. Like Velasquez, he was much about the court, but if there was a difference between their masters there was also a decisive difference between the two men themselves. I do not share my prophetic friend's belief that this difference will declare itself two hundred years hence in Goya's favor. There was a calm perfection about Velasquez, a beautiful poise, which seems to insure his supremacy. But in one respect Goya undoubtedly challenges him, in the piercing eloquence of his psychology. It is as though this initiate in life knew all men and women, to their depths, and was prepared to take incredible liberties. There comes back to mind the old story of the doctors who were enabled correctly to diagnose the nervous ailment of a patient only after they had seen her portrait painted by Sargent. The American might have taken his cue from Goya. King or courtier, poet or bull fighter, duchess or actress, he grasps each in his or her quiddity, placing the image upon canvas with that stamp of spiritual truth upon it which makes a portrait of enduring and universal rather than merely temporary, private interest. Furthermore, while his period gave him a hard-bitten society to portray, abounding in the worldliest of worldly traits, he had it in him to paint over and over again, with the utmost sensitiveness, the delicate characteristics of childhood. And he does these things with a magnificent brush.

I have glanced at the cult that painters have had for him, from Delacroix down. It takes account of a

manual power that did not immediately find itself and that was, to be sure, unevenly exerted. At its best it discloses the originality and authority of genius. "I can only see masses in light," he was wont to say, "and masses in shadow, planes which advance, or planes which recede, reliefs or backgrounds. . . . Nature is the only master in drawing." In that big, free way he saw the object and so rendered it, a sure, swinging workman. Nature, Velasquez and Rembrandt were his own sole masters, he said. He was of the race of the great technicians, the men from whom there flowed our modern tradition. He had, too, their supreme sincerity. He could, on occasion, be as graceful as any of the Frenchmen to whom I alluded just now, as witness, for example, his "Marquesa de la Solana" or the "Duchess of Alba" at the Hispanic Museum. But he never dreamt of sacrificing the simple, palpitant fact to any factitious hypothesis of grace. In the length and breadth of his portraiture you find nothing to suggest the formalism in design so representative of the period in England and in France. He may pose his sitter a little stiffly sometimes, but in general he makes you feel that he has taken that sitter as he found him. When he gets to work on the face, on the eyes and mouth, invoking the nuances of character, you forget all about "pattern" and think only of the personality to the fore. You think only of human nature—and of brilliant craftsmanship, of the restraint

and polish with which a contour is defined, of color now silvery and now flashing, of a brush that is both deft and weighty. He is indeed a painter's painter, with his dexterity and his directness. With his insight, too, he is a painter for all mankind. Compare "Las Meninas" and "The Family of Charles IV." The masterpiece of Velasquez, as a piece of pure painting, is incomparable, a touchstone for all technicians. But Goya's family group at least approaches it in virtuosity, and as a human document it cuts even deeper.

VI

TIEPOLO

VI

TIEPOLO

EVERY lover of art has had the experience of encountering some work which, regardless of its critical or historical status, has lodged itself in his memory in an especially endearing way. I remember such an experience in the Prado years ago. Every day I would go there and live among the works of Velasquez. They were first and last the objects of my study. But every day before I came away I would pause for a moment before Tiepolo's "Car of Venus," and that was a moment of mere unthinking delight. It is only an *ébauche,* a project for a ceiling hastily sketched, but it is one of the master's most effective compositions and in its ineffable lightness it seems an affair of rose leaves and whipped cream. I dote upon that Tiepolo. I dote upon all Tiepolos. Once in Vienna I got wind of some prodigious paintings of his, designs based upon classical themes, and finally I tracked them to the possession of the Artarias, Beethoven's old publishers. Straightway I got in touch with the head of the firm and he gave me a brochure on his treasures. The plates made my mouth water. I couldn't see the originals. He told me they were at the moment rolled up in a tin box in London, which was to say that they were "in the market." We talked wistfully of the possibility of

their coming to America. Herr Artaria had dreams of their being purchased here. But negotiations never came off, and I have always mourned the fact, wondering if so good a set of Tiepolos would ever reach America.

Sometimes dreams come true. The Artaria decorations are still, so far as I know, in Europe, but when Sedelmeyer showed them in Paris, some time before the war, he showed with them four superb decorations in the same *genre*. These were purchased by the late James Deering, and by his bequest they came into the possession of the Chicago Art Institute. It is in my opinion one of the richest gifts ever made to an American museum, for it represents one of the full-rounded achievements of a great painter. Tiepolo takes his subject from Tasso and depicts episodes in the romance of Rinaldo and Armida. In his first scene the sleeping hero beholds the lady of his dreams. In the next they are together in a happy garden, unconscious of the grim Ubaldo and Guelfo, come upon their disturbing mission. Then in another panel the warriors tear Rinaldo from his enchantment, and in the last the hermit is completing the liberation. There is nothing poignant about any of the pictures, not even about the one celebrating Armida's abandonment. It was hard for Tiepolo to be tragic when he dipped into poetry. He found in Tasso, rather, the stuff for so many operatic tableaux. Nothing could be, indeed, more characteristic

RINALDO ENCHANTED BY ARMIDA

FROM THE PAINTING BY TIEPOLO IN THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

of him than this series. There are other beautiful examples of him in this country. There are several in the Metropolitan Museum, notably the fine "Glorification of Francesco Barbaro," and there are other important souvenirs in American collections. But the Chicago set has a peculiar significance here. As I have indicated, it takes us to the very core of Tiepolo's art, constituting as it were a complete chapter in the history of that art, one with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Tiepolo is inseparable from his background. His is the soul of eighteenth-century Venice, and that, to be correctly understood, must be isolated with some care. Long before he was born the splendors of the Renaissance had faded, and not only had the artistic sway of the Venetian school been broken, but the moral fibre of the republic had been irretrievably sapped. Along with the spiritual force of Bellini, the technical *maestria* of Titian and Tintoretto had gone down the wind, and there were seemingly no elements in the national energy to stimulate artistic genius as a part of the national life. Sinister elements in political activity were matched by social corruption. The whole civilization of the place and epoch was materialized, tainted, and unwholesome. Meanwhile it was incomparably glittering and gay. Ever since I read the "Memoirs" of Goldoni, I have made a cult of the eighteenth century in Venice. One of the most exciting moments in my life was when I had even

better luck than John Addington Symonds, and pounced upon a complete copy of the rare "Memorie Inutili" of Carlo Gozzi. I never go rambling through that period without huge enjoyment. But I am never unconscious, either, of a certain unreal and meretricious air enveloping the scene. One is always asking, involuntarily: "What good could come out of that phosphorescent world?" Even as one asks the question one is thrown back, as though in the revolving of a circle, upon the charm of just that self-same phosphorescence. Gaiety, as we are often enough reminded, is infectious. The prevailing gaiety of eighteenth-century Venice is very beguiling. After all, it is amusing to look on at some amorous adventure and to watch light-hearted gamblers, especially when you see the spectacle under a romantically moonlit sky, noting all manner of picturesqueness the while in architecture and costume. Life seems to move with consummate grace and wit to the music of flutes and violins, and in this case that very unreality of which I have spoken serves as a mitigation of the central Venetian defects. By some freak of the imagination we seem concerned not so much with life itself as with a theatrical pageant. Moreover, art arrives at a validity of its own. Out of that artificial cosmos there emerge the smiling portraits of Rosalba, the piquant figures of Longhi, the luminous scenes of Guardi, and, most rewarding of all, the truly magnificent creations of Tiepolo.

They called him Tiepoletto, to distinguish his name from that of the great patrician family of Venice, but Giovanni Battista could fashion his own patent of nobility. His father was a ship-captain in commerce, a prosperous man with a large family. Our Tiepolo was born in Venice in 1696. Very little is known about his private life, and beyond the fact that his artistic predilections developed in his early youth, that he received some training from the quite negligible Gregorio Lazzarini, the incidents of his pupilage remain obscure. He was married at the age of twenty-three to Cecilia Guardi, Francesco's sister. The elder Tiepolo, whom he lost while he was still a child, left him in good circumstances, and he seems to have advanced with great rapidity in his professional career, receiving many commissions for work in Venetian churches and palaces and in villas on the mainland. His fame spread abroad. By the time he was forty he was the subject of a fervid recommendation from the Swedish minister to his king, then looking for a decorator for the palace at Stockholm. "Tiepolo," wrote the diplomat, "is made expressly for us. . . . He paints a picture in less time than it takes another to grind his colors." But he did not go to Sweden. He travelled about instead in the Veneto and Lombardy. You see him plying his brush at Udine and Vicenza, at Milan and Bergamo, at Padua and Verona, to say nothing of Venice. Then he goes outside Italy, to paint on an immense

scale in the episcopal palace at Wurzburg, in Franconia, taking three years to complete his task. The ceiling above the grand staircase is vast enough to have kept him going far longer. In 1761 Charles III invited him to the Spanish court, and he did the great decorations in the palace at Madrid, besides other paintings. Molmenti, his canonical biographer, can tell us only too little about the Spanish sojourn. There was a quarrel with Raphael Mengs, but otherwise we have only the works to which to turn. Though he hungered to get back to Venice, he died on Spanish soil in 1770.

I gather that he was a man of light and pleasant humor, a man of *esprit,* as Tessin, the Swedish minister called him. And if there is not much about his life in the books, it is because his life was lived utterly in his art. That might be inferred from the almost unbelievable volume of his work. He covered acres of ceiling and wall space, and he painted no end of altar-pieces and easel pictures. Molmenti tells a droll story of the painter's wife once going in his absence to tempt fortune at the Ridotto. When she had gambled away every penny she had, her companion persuaded her to stake all the sketches in Tiepolo's studio. She lost them, of course, and their villa, too, but all I think of in this anecdote is that mass of work in the studio. He could easily have replaced it. He was one of the swiftest and most prolific painters the world has ever known. In sheer bulk of achieve-

ment, I doubt if any of the giants of the Renaissance surpassed him. What of the quality of this immense *œuvre* of his?

It is the quality of painter's painting, which is to say of work that is fascinating because of the way in which it is done. Tiepolo is nothing if not a great craftsman, a technician whose dexterity is at the heart of effects extraordinarily beautiful. There is something mysterious and something exciting about his appearance in this rôle. By the time Tiepolo was born the puissant brushmen had all become more or less legendary. The Dutch tradition was dying down. Velasquez had been in his grave nearly forty years. As for the Italians, there was not a man left among the painters living when Tiepolo came to manhood who was even remotely qualified to lead him into the path he was destined to follow. But the great shade of Veronese was there to kindle the fires latent in him, and to Paolo's architectural inspiration he gave a new lease of life. He is, indeed, a Veronese born again, with the differences inevitable in the development of an original genius. The earlier man was grave, monumental, a type of the grand style. Tiepolo not merely softened his grandeur, but gave it a blithe and even lyrical turn. He substituted a kind of rhetorical bravura for the majestic and sustained organ music of Veronese. When Symonds came to pay his tribute to Tiepolo in that charming little book of his, "In the Key of Blue," he chose,

curiously, an altar-piece for his theme. I cannot quite understand his ardor for the master in sentimental-devout mood, nor can I share his feeling that Tiepolo spent too much time upon decorative schemes for baroque buildings. They were, as it seems to me, what he was invented to produce. But nothing more penetrating has ever been written about Tiepolo than this passage in which Symonds sums up his impression: "Within a narrow space the master has played with architectural perspective, with atmosphere, with consummate drawing of the human form, with cunning composition; and these essentials of art he has used as preludes to the revel of his light and color sense." The English critic shrewdly and very suggestively traces the character of this craftsmanship back to what he calls Tiepolo's "peculiar and just perception of certain atmospheric and color qualities in his birthplace." In other words, he was not only as a man but as an artist, a vivid, eager denizen of the lagoons, a loving son of the skies above them. It is one of the blest paradoxes of art that this dweller in a world of thrice-sophisticated artifice, this designer of what I have called operatic tableaux, should have burst the bonds of his social and mental *milieu* and dealt in pictorial *frou-frou* as though it were the stuff of palpitating life itself. His vitality is one secret of his spell.

No modern impressionist has known better how to give a plangent color its full value, and, by the same

token, Whistler himself was never surer in the painting of a nuance of tone. Nor has any modern painter ever been skilfuller than Tiepolo in enveloping a composition in light and air. His skill as such is beyond measurement. He was a monster of cleverness before cleverness as a studio trick had got itself recognized. It wasn't a trick with Tiepolo, but a sincere and forthright exploitation of an unimaginable manual adroitness. He drew, he used the brush, with the certitude of breathing. Moreover, and this is one of the finest things about him, these natural gifts of his, this spontaneity and this *furia,* were amazingly well organized and controlled. If he had one faculty more dazzling than any other, it was his faculty for filling a space. I have alluded to his kinship with Veronese. It comes out in such a *tour-de-force* of mural decoration as he wrought in the Palazzo Labia. You see there how worthy of Veronese he was in building up an heroic architectural ensemble. But Tiepolo is even more the magical Tiepolo when he sails off into the blue on his own, as at Wurzburg or Madrid or Strà, or in any of the great churches, and seems on a vast ceiling not so much to build as to improvise. Then he paints like an angel. The architectural motive is not forgotten. The decoration has its base. It is duly tied to the cornice. It has balance and order. But what one is chiefly aware of is a cloud of figures dispersed in a skyey area, flung pell-mell into a kind of flickering flight, and invariably, through every mutation of

movement, falling into the right relation to the artist's broad purpose. That purpose may have had some spiritual or imaginative origin. Tiepolo was a great man for dipping into mythology or the lives of the saints. But I would be a bit puzzled if I ever met anybody who had given any attention to Tiepolo's "meaning." There is a sense in which he has no meaning. Looking at one of his ceilings, you do not care a straw whether conception of it sprang from the Scriptures or the classics. All that you care for is the harmony embracing the master's properties, the decorative felicity of sprawling legs and outspread arms, of billowing or fluttering draperies, of birds and Cupids added like floating flowers to the whole gleaming fabric. The fate or the function of his gods and goddesses and saints does not matter at all. All that matters is that he fills the eye with sensuous beauty.

He tried, no doubt, on many an occasion, to do more than that, leaving behind him a really imposing quantity of religious pictures, and, I suppose, there are instances in which he touches the heart. He does so, in a measure at all events, in the work which registers his high-water mark as a devotional artist, the "Supper at Emmaus" in the Louvre. Unquestionably it is a fine picture. Yet if, in the next moment, I happen to recall Rembrandt's painting of the same subject, I find Tiepolo's composition crumpling up. It looks positively stagey beside the Dutchman's canvas. That, I must confess, is what I always feel

when Tiepolo paints a picture making a religious appeal. Only, as I have hinted before, one can't be altogether exacting or completely logical where Tiepolo and eighteenth-century Venice are concerned. If you are wise you meet them half-way, and refrain absolutely from asking them for what they have not got to give. I do not ask Tiepolo for poetry and dreams, though he dabbled in both. I do not ask him for the spirit of Biblical story, though he was always delving in the Scriptures for his themes. I do not ask him for meticulous accuracy in the matters of history and manners, though he will set Antony and Cleopatra at table together, with all the aplomb in the world, and paint Contarini receiving Henri III at Mira as circumstantially as though he had witnessed the scene. In doing these things he may take any liberty he likes in respect to costume and architecture, establishing his personages in a world that is not theirs, but his own and the world of Venice. He may do all this and my withers are unwrung. All that I ask of him is that he should be the marvellous man of his hands, the miracle-worker in technique, the conjurer in fresco, the master of feats in color, luminosity, and design, the breath-taking wielder of the brush. In that character he is, without qualification, one of the transcendent figures in the history of painting.

VII

AN ORIENTAL ON BOTTICELLI

VII

AN ORIENTAL ON BOTTICELLI

THE appeal of Oriental art to the Occidental mind is that of an exotic and recondite thing. Western commentators are prone to dwell on the deep differences involved in a transition from one point of the compass to another. How do writers in the East feel about it? It is hard to say, for we have few opportunities to consult their views. But now and then, at long intervals, we get some light. The Japanese scholar, Okakura, whose visit to this country is well remembered, was convinced of the cleavage between his native art and that of Europe. He rendered invaluable service to his own people in his stalwart advocacy of the movement to keep their art safe in its integrity from encroachments of the Western spirit. Yet even Okakura was aware of points of contact between the two worlds, and in the matter of appreciation he showed that the Oriental mind is peculiarly sensitive to nominally alien impressions. I have some interesting souvenirs of his open-mindedness. When I was writing the biography of John La Farge he often talked to me about the clairvoyant understanding of his Japanese friend, and he gave me, among other things, this anecdote:

On one of his first days here I took him to see some wonderful Rembrandts. Okakura knelt before

them and said: "This is what the great Chinese artists in black-and-white meant to do." Then he recognized carefully and analyzed the same points that we are speaking of, taking one day to study the arrangement of line and space, the next day for the study of the arrangement of black-and-white, and the next day again for the picture part, that told the story, the wonderful meaning and the extraordinary skill in drawing which allowed those incredible subtle meanings to be represented by a line of the etcher. As you see, he was faithful to the fundamental laws, those by which I hold, and he saw first the basis of the Rembrandt, which it has in common with all great work, and then the special beauties of Rembrandt himself.

Ever since La Farge told me that story I have been waiting and watching for some further revelation of the Oriental attitude in the presence of Western art. Japanese paintings tinctured by European ideas of conception and technique have shown me that a process of initiation has been going on in the East, despite the barrage laid down by Okakura. But they have told me little enough about the operations of the mentality behind them. How does an Oriental feel when he is confronted by one of our masters? Does he grasp the idiom which the latter employs? Is he happy in his apprehension of it? Does he recognize in it "the fundamental laws" to which La Farge referred, and do they, for him, make the West and the East seem essentially identical? At last I

have received answers to these questions, answers embodied in one of the most beautiful books I have ever read. Under the title of "Sandro Botticelli," Mr. Yukio Yashiro, professor of the history of art in the Imperial Academy of Tokio, has published a work of really extraordinary significance. Tackling a peculiarly difficult subject in the Florentine master and writing in limpid English, he has made a study which shows at once that for a cultivated man of his origin Western art has no barriers. He moves as freely in the Quattrocento as though he were examining the intellectual and spiritual phenomena of Japan. He penetrates to the core of Botticelli, and arrives at an interpretation which I believe will be received into the literature of Italian painting with profound respect. He is all sympathy and comprehension. It is fairly enchanting to accompany him upon an adventure that must, for an Oriental, be unique.

At the very outset Professor Yashiro discloses that about which his reader is likely to be most curious, his point of view, his critical method. His opening words are eloquently characteristic. "This is a book of Art," he says. "Its appeal is to the human heart. In the appreciation of Art there is no such thing as authority. Scholarship adorns, even dignifies criticism, but does not authorize it. A critic should not pose as a judge: he is a friend. My wish is to deliver Art from the guidance of specialists

and return it to the simple desire of man. I loved Botticelli and studied him; that is all. I have written down my joy that others may share it, or rather that others may open their eyes and get greater delight from Art in their own way. I long to see my book reach congenial hearts that love beauty, rather than brains of pure scholarship." It is hard to express my full appreciation of this simple, almost naïve, exordium. It comes as an ineffable relief after the oracular pontification of so much modern art criticism. Art criticism could not function without the aid of the scientific principles developed by Morelli, but it falls upon dry pedantry when it exalts those principles into a kind of dogmatic and fetichistical status. "Art," says Professor Yashiro, "is not a theoretical business. It is strictly an affair of human experience." The point is one which I have longed for years to see more widely understood. The artist is not a demigod. No matter how great he is, he remains a human being, and his work is subject to the ups and downs of human endeavor. Clearly, the Oriental mind as it is exemplified in Professor Yashiro is aware of this. He approaches Botticelli, he approaches his whole task, in the gentlest and most modest way imaginable, seeking only to get at the truth. Nor does his discriminating view of scholarship mean for a moment that he undervalues it. On the contrary, it is plain that he is a learned man, conversant with all the authorities. There is every sign

in his book that he has himself made good use of the bibliography he gives in an appendix. He knows all about the Morellian hypothesis. He has foregathered long with Berenson, and he shares in the grateful appreciation which every student of Italian art must feel for that sterling critic. But he uses the scientific method only as it should be used, as a means to an end, as but a part of the critic's equipment, and I have never read a book on Botticelli—or on any other old master—as free as this one is from those vague conjectures in respect to "attribution" which so often give the reader a sense of chewing on sawdust. Professor Yashiro is as keen on attribution as anybody. He has, indeed, a notable discovery of a new Botticelli to his credit, in the shape of the beautiful "Trinity with Saint John and Mary Magdalene," in the collection of Viscount Lee of Fareham. But here again, as in all the scientific and scholarly relations of his work, he writes with an eye single only to his main purpose—the stimulation of his reader to joy in Botticelli.

It is interesting to glance for a moment at Professor Yashiro's predecessors. There lies before me in its old vellum covers the Vasari of 1568. The "Vita" given to Botticelli fills only four and a half pages, and it does not even begin to foreshadow the estimate of the subject to be developed in modern times. Thenceforth Botticelli suffered centuries of neglect, and not even in our own day was his genius imme-

diately acclaimed. Morelli was cool toward it, and so were Crowe and Cavalcaselle. German criticism has been fairly serviceable to Botticelli. Only the other day a translation of Bode's excellent monograph appeared. But Botticelli has been more particularly the property of English writers. Ruskin rose to him, and Pater's essay, dating from 1870, is famous. A sentence in it, by the way, is indicative of the position the painter occupied even then. "But," says Pater, "after all, it may be asked, is a painter like Botticelli—a secondary painter—a proper subject for general criticism?" The canonical biography is that by Herbert Horne, published in a magnificent folio in 1908. It is a marvellous work of documentation, and will probably always retain its commanding rôle. But it makes rather hard reading and it is inadequate as a matter of research into the imponderables. There was left Professor Yashiro's opportunity and there he has beautifully triumphed.

His triumph is one of subtly insinuating analysis, which seems to start from a kind of inner grasp upon Botticelli, to work steadily from within outward. Though he is conscious of external conditions, he exposes them for what they were, elements subdued to the essential stuff of Botticelli's genius. Thus he is admirable in his elucidation of what the painter owed to his master, Fra Filippo Lippi, and he reveals the most delicate nuances in that study of nature which Botticelli began under his senior. His first

quarrel with the authorities comes apropos of the period of pupilage. Uhlmann would have it that, after his stay with Fra Filippo, Botticelli turned to Verrocchio. Horne would place him in the *bottega* of Antonio Pollaiuolo. With the sweet reasonableness and common sense that steadily mark him, Professor Yashiro takes account of both influences. It is very like him, and if I had unlimited space I would enjoy enumerating the instances of his polite but firm disagreement with the pundits. But I may only note that he has an edifying way of justifying his independence, and then pass on to the broader matter of his interpretation. One of the first things you observe about this is his freedom from the hyperbole of hero-worship. He knows, as we all know now, that Botticelli was the "secondary painter" of Pater's phrase only in the sense that he was a lesser man than, say, Leonardo and Michael Angelo, and his appraisal is pitched in a sufficiently high key. But he keeps his perspective sound, and is perfectly aware of his painter's limitations. "Botticelli," he says, for example, "was never omnipotent. Rather the contrary, he was a somewhat ill-balanced genius." When he comes to the opinion current among some scholars, based largely on the painter's interest in Dante, that Botticelli was possessed of a high literary culture, he frankly doubts it. But he has no doubt at all of the central originality and inspiration which governed Botticelli, and in analyzing the nature of these

resources he makes singularly natural and clear their successful exercise regardless of innate deficiencies. He shows us how Botticelli developed a firm naturalism under Fra Filippo, and how the painter then paused in emulation of a measurable technique and superimposed upon it his own style, his own vision, his own poetry.

Professor Yashiro is strong on the poetic grain of Botticelli. Passing from the consideration of certain landscape motives in the work of the artist which are of a distinctly realistic order, he says: "When we come to the Birth of Venus the case is just the reverse. It became an entirely poetic world; the suggestion of a real sea-beach is now remote from the painter's motive, which seems to have been devoted from the first to the invocation of a beautiful atmosphere in which to play a decorative drama." The force of nature is there, but the observable fact is heightened and transmogrified. It is poetized. The author sees Botticelli as the creator of "an artistic land where truth and myth live together." He thinks that the Florentine was the last of the artists in history to establish such a land. "What makes him so attractive," he says, "is that he painted impossible things, but made you believe them by the sheer force of beauty." It is in the key of this observation that the argument persistently continues. Somewhere he makes the remark that "those who love Botticelli are all to some extent poets." Professor Yashiro inevi-

tably suggests that he is himself something of a poet. But I must make two notes on this point. In the first place, his poetic fervor does not betray him into fine writing. Secondly, it does not interfere with a well-balanced and methodical examination of the subject. The successive stages of Botticelli's passage through life are lucidly set forth. We see him in Florence. We follow him on his journey to Rome, and watch him at work in the Sistine Chapel. We trace all his professional dealings, we survey his activity as illustrator of Dante, and we recognize the influence of Savonarola upon him in his closing years. The mere life of Botticelli is well written in this book. But side by side with the incidents that go to make the narrative, there are developed the traits that go to make the character and that support the author's interpretation.

From the Botticelli whom Professor Yashiro calls realistic proceed first the Botticelli who was sensuous, then the man of sentiment, and finally the mystic. Through his art you can see the man grow and no phase of that art is neglected: his portraiture and his landscape, his treatment of flowers and of the human body, his magic in the portrayal of hands and hair, his special note in draperies, his "music of line," and his charm in color, his religious and his mythological inspirations—all these things are not so much dissected, they are discovered as with a touch following the tendrils of a vine. Some of these an-

alyses have a remarkable fascination, seeming to pluck the very heart out of an individuality. The chapter on hands, for example, is wonderfully revealing, bringing out the far more than naturalistic quality that belongs to the subject. It closes, I may note in passing, with a reference to a portrait that is in America. Speaking of the way in which Botticelli's characteristic hand developed as it were psychologically, he says: "At the end of this study let us admire the finest hand ever painted by him, in which, I may say, all the qualities I have mentioned were perfectly combined. I mean the hand of the 'Portrait of a Young Man' in Mr. Clarence Mackay's collection in New York. It is the hand of an Adonis, where the soft feminine charm is mingled with a man's strength, though still young. It is a perfect hand. Except in a few of El Greco's masterpieces, you cannot see such a hand, a mere hand, with a whole mystery behind it." It is a perfect hand, according to Professor Yashiro, because it is a creation of beauty, because it is the truth raised to a higher power and invested with Botticellian magic. So he interprets all the works. He does not neglect their literary foundations. He reckons with Poliziano and Dante when it is proper he should do so. But he never forgets the pure artist, and the essence of his book may be found in the statement that Botticelli's art "consisted primarily in exquisite arabesques of sensuous refinement." That, and the constant in-

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN

FROM THE PAINTING BY BOTTICELLI IN THE COLLECTION OF CLARENCE H. MACKAY

sistence upon the painter's genius for rhythmic linear expression, is not, perhaps, startlingly original. I would not call Professor Yashiro's book an altogether novel contribution to the subject. But in its cumulative power of interpretation it takes on a certain new and original quality.

In the literature of Botticelli to which I have already alluded there are certain writings which are, in some sort, landmarks. Vasari makes one of them. Pater has an honorable place, and so has Lippmann, with the book of Dante drawings that he published in 1896. Horne's book is priceless. But in the whole mass I know of nothing that can quite touch this work of a Japanese scholar, nothing so sympathetic, so full of insight, so luminous, and so penetrating in the divination of the secret of Sandro Botticelli. The curious thing about it, too, is that it is not in any obvious way Japanese. Professor Yashiro's portrait of the painter is in no wise colored by Oriental preoccupations. He points out some fascinating analogies between Botticelli and one or two Japanese masters, notably Utamaro, but there is nothing invidious in any of his comparisons. His might be a Western mind so far as instinctive feeling and comprehension go. I do not know how or why he became interested in Botticelli. With the good breeding that belongs to his book he says next to nothing about himself. I only know that he seems to have been born to write on his subject.

VIII

ALBRECHT DÜRER

VIII

ALBRECHT DÜRER

ALBRECHT DÜRER was born at Nuremberg on May 21, 1471. He died at the same place on April 6, 1528. On the four hundredth anniversary of the latter date the citizens of his native town launched a series of celebrations to be continued for weeks. All summer, indeed, the traveller in Germany was made aware of Dürer, for his works were brought into the foreground and nothing was left undone that might in one way or another revive the appeal of his genius. He is one of the most portentous figures in the national Walhalla. He is more than that. He belongs in the company of the universally accepted masters. He is a world classic. It is always worth while to dwell upon his traits and for my own part I could ask no more delightful theme, for his art has been a passion of mine from my youth up.

I was lucky in my introduction to that art. I had known it more or less in the engravings, but back in the early 80's there fell into my hands the memorable work of Charles Ephrussi, "Albert Dürer et ses dessins," with its perfect plates. That book brought home to me the greatest of all the virtues of Dürer, his draughtsmanship, and thenceforth I was sealed of the tribe of the Nuremberger. Prolonged study of his life and work has only deepened my feeling for

him. There is, indeed, something curiously endearing about this great German. In his greatness he is still so human. Other dwellers on the Parnassus of art hold themselves aloof. He had his reserves, no doubt, but he mingled very sympathetically with his fellows, and an atmosphere of friendliness envelops his personality to this day. This, too, despite the gravity belonging to all the portraits that we have of him. There is something positively pontifical about the famous full-face at Munich, dated 1500, and even in earlier self-portraits, starting with the one in the Albertina that he drew when he was thirteen, he is nothing if not serious. And yet I feel his friendliness, the warmth of his nature, the qualities that made him the beloved companion of Willibald Pirkheimer and other jovial humanists of his day. I fancy it is just the sheer artist in him that accounts for this charm of his, that temperament which may be never so grave and yet will be on the side of freedom and intellectual adventure. He was patiently industrious if ever an artist was, and at the same time you are bound to think of him as a courageous, questing spirit. If he could obey routine, he could also make a decisive departure from it. The point comes out in one of those precious passages of self-revelation which we have from his pen:

This my dear Father was very careful with his children to bring them up in the fear of God; for

it was his highest wish to train them well that they might be pleasing in the sight both of God and man. Wherefore his daily speech to us was that we should love God and deal truly with our neighbors. And my Father took special pleasure in me because he saw that I was diligent in striving to learn. So he sent me to school, and when I had learnt to read and write he took me away from it, and taught me the goldsmith's craft [which was the father's own]. But when I could work neatly my liking drew me rather to painting than to goldsmith's work, so I laid it before my Father; but he was not well pleased, regretting the time lost while I had been learning to be a goldsmith. Still he let it be as I wished, and in 1486 my Father bound me apprentice to Michael Wolgemut, to serve him three years long. During that time God gave me diligence so that I learnt well, but I had much to suffer from his lads.

I love those closing words, "I had much to suffer from his lads." Did they get a little bored by his excellent ways? Was there a trace of priggishness in him, the outcome of his amazing precocity? If the priggishness was there, we may be sure that it passed; else he would not have been the lovable young man that we have every reason to believe he was. Wolgemut taught him much in the ordinary way of his craft. Inborn genius did the rest. "When I had finished my learning," he says, "my Father sent me off, and I stayed away four years till he called me back again." Nobody knows precisely where he went. He saw a good deal of Germany, it is prob-

able, and there is a chance that he went south. All that we know for certain is that on his return to Nuremberg he was married to Agnes Frey. The commentators are at a loss as to what to say about that lady, suspecting that Pirkheimer may have said too much when he described her as a shrew, but they unite in ascribing to the time of his marriage the opening of his life as a responsible artist, presiding over a busy workshop. When he visits Venice about ten years later he is a recognized and much-respected personage. "Giovanni Bellini," he records, "has highly praised me before many nobles. He wanted to have something of mine, and himself came to me and asked me to paint him something and he would pay well for it." When he was not hunting down gems for Pirkheimer he was haunting the studios. His soul was at peace in Venice and there he produced one of the most famous of his pictures, "The Feast of the Rose Garlands," which the German merchants in Venice had commissioned him to paint for their place of meeting, the familiar Fondaco dei Tedeschi. When he went back to Nuremberg it was with greatly heightened prestige.

He became in due course the court painter of Emperor Maximilian. He was a famous man when he started for a year's journey in the Netherlands in the summer of 1520. I would like to follow him upon all these various movements of his, to trace in detail the incidents of his career down to the day of

his death, but for that, obviously, a volume is required. And in any case I am impatient to get at the works. One of the best of all keys to them lies in the preface which Camerarius wrote for Dürer's "Four Books of Human Proportions," the particular passage to which I refer being the one relating an incident between the master and Bellini:

Albrecht frankly admired and made much of all Bellini's works. Bellini also candidly expressed his admiration of various features of Albrecht's skill and particularly the fineness and delicacy with which he drew hairs. It chanced one day that they were talking about art, and when their conversation was done Bellini said: "Will you be so kind, Albrecht, as to gratify a friend in a small matter?" "You shall soon see," says Albrecht, "if you will ask of me anything I can do for you." Then says Bellini: "I want you to make me a present of one of the brushes with which you draw hairs." Dürer at once produced several, just like other brushes, and, in fact, of the kind Bellini himself used, and told him to choose those he liked best, or to take them all if he would. But Bellini, thinking he was misunderstood, said: "No, I don't mean these, but the ones with which you draw several hairs with one stroke; they must be rather spread out and more divided; otherwise in a long sweep such regularity of curvature and distance could not be preserved." "I use no other than these," says Albrecht, "and to prove it you may watch me." Then, taking up one of the same brushes, he drew some very long wavy tresses, such as women generally wear, in the most regular order and

symmetry. Bellini looked on wondering, and afterward confessed to many that no human being could have convinced him by report of the truth of that which he had seen with his own eyes.

Camerarius goes on to tell how Mantegna shared the curiosity of Bellini, and on his death-bed begged Dürer to come to him. He wanted to "fortify his [Albrecht's] facility and certainty of hand with scientific knowledge and principles." It tore Dürer's heart that he could not get to Mantua in time. But, if he had, it is doubtful if Mantegna could have added much to his manual certitude. There was already implicit in it an extraordinary fund of scientific feeling. Dürer was not only wont to keep his eye on the object but he always made a piercing study of it. Organic truth is at the bottom of his astounding draughtsmanship.

It is as an Olympian draughtsman that he chiefly survives. Much more than the power of line was added unto him. He was a deeply religious man, with a rich tincture of the philosophic liberalism that came in with the Renaissance. He was profoundly reflective. He loved the subtleties of Pirkheimer's argumentative circle, and his devotional woodcuts show how energetically he entered into the thoughtful life of his time. But he would never have gained currency for any of his ideas if that fecund imagination of his had not had a miracle-working hand to interpret its urgings. He seems at one moment the

very antithesis of everything merely disciplinary in art. "Love and delight therein," runs one of his maxims, "are better teachers of the art of painting than compulsion is." How he would have hated a crass academician! But, he says again, "if a man is to become a really great painter he must be educated thereto from his very earliest years," and you see not only the man of genius but the rigorously trained craftsman in the hero of that encounter with Bellini. It was because he had a masterful hand that he could draw those hairs with any brush.

It was, as I have already indicated, a precocious hand. He was a mere youth when he painted the great portrait of his father, yet in the searching definition of form it is one of his prime works. In portraiture, I may add, he is most convincingly the painter. Certain heads of his, the portraits of himself, the portraits of Oswolt Krell, Michael Wolgemut, Imhof, Holzschuher, and Jacob Müffel, are among the major monuments in the art. In them the excessive devotion to detail which hurts his pictures momentarily lapses. He sees the subject "in the large" and portrays it with boldness and simplicity. It takes on a kind of sculpturesque dignity, something akin to grandeur. The painter's mood has always in these works a measure of austerity. It is as though he were veritably characterizing his sitter for all time, and, without any straining after effect, somehow ennobled him.

In the pictures he has never seemed to me to be quite as much at ease as in the portraits. He carries on the narrative style of Wolgemut at too pedestrian a pace, builds up his scheme with an orderly sense of design but overdoes the detail. Criticism rejoices, and wisely, that he was not swept off his feet by Renaissance Italy. As Sir Martin Conway tersely puts it: "Dürer's German heart was true." That lordly picture, "The Feast of the Rose Garlands," is a very different thing from an Italian altar-piece, and one must be glad of it, inasmuch as it therefore remains a purer expression of the master's genius. But that is not to say that it would not have been improved, as a composition, by an infusion of the Italian instinct for abstract, classical design. "The artist," said Whistler, "is known by what he omits." Dürer, the picture-maker, is known by what he does not omit, by the pressure upon his central motive of a pell-mell of figures whose individual traits distract the attention and in a way dislocate the unity of his main purpose. In the same way his resistance to Southern ideals tells in his conception of form, which rarely errs on the side of grace or charm. Just as he substituted a certain human, domestic sweetness for the mystical sentiment of the Italian school, so in his attitude toward form he brushed aside the preoccupation with the antique so characteristic of the Renaissance and looked, instead, at life as it was lived about him. If he lost

something thereby he gained more. The truth of life makes the central spring of his inspiration.

Being, as I have said, above all things an artist, he could not altogether escape the appeal of that sensuous quality in form which meant so much to his Italian colleagues. Now and then it unmistakably touches his art. There is a "Lucretia" of his at Munich which has something of the suave beauty of a Greek statue. Among the engravings his "Apollo" wears the truly statuesque beauty of the pagan tradition. But in that very plate the Diana seated at the feet of Apollo is a reminder of the artist's essentially German point of view. Dürer treated the nude in the sixteenth century somewhat as Rubens did in the seventeenth. He would make even a goddess look very like a *Hausfrau*. It is part of his Germanic make-up, part of his intense dedication to the truth. His nudes are rarely if ever lovely things. The female figure in "The Dream," the types in the "Four Naked Women," the massive winged apparition in the "Great Fortune," are all redundant dames. In Italy the same models would have been translated into far more beautiful images. But they wouldn't have been kept truer, more eloquent of the pulsing energy of life—and they would never have been more powerfully drawn. Michael Angelo alone would have matched Dürer's sinewy line.

You come back to that in the engravings on metal or on wood, and in the drawings, with a sense of

downright excitement—it is line so pure, so individual, and so glorious. A certain clean-cut, tense line is characteristic of the school in his epoch. He had participants in its genius both amongst his mature contemporaries and in his younger disciples. But no other German could quite bend his bow. No other craftsman in line anywhere has ever surpassed him in a kind of passionless sweep. There are portraits of his like the "Paumgartner" and the "Varnbuler" which can only be described as magnificent in their easy breadth. There are others, like the "Man Ninety-three Years Old" or the "Head of an Apostle," which are marked by an exquisiteness making us wonder again with Bellini how the miracle is worked. He makes a study for hands pressed together in prayer, the study for the hands of an apostle in the "Assumption," and it seems as if delicacy could no farther go, delicacy combined with a sublime sureness. What he could do when he was anatomizing form he could do, too, when he was occupied with purely decorative swirls. Witness the celebrated "Coat of Arms, with a Cock." Line here takes endless turnings, but it never falters. There was, to be sure, no limit to the adaptability of his imperious technique. The same hand that could envisage the head of Erasmus with a stroke having positive grandeur in it could draw the form and fur of that "Crouching Hare" which is among the marvels in the Albertina.

He is scantily represented as a painter here in the United States. There are a couple of small religious subjects in the Metropolitan Museum. Colonel Friedsam has another. I have seen an interesting "Knight in Armor" in the Emery collection, at Cincinnati and Mr. Bache has a beautiful "Portrait of a Lady." A notable "Portrait of a Man" passed through the hands of the Knoedlers not so long ago. But the painted things form a restricted group. On the other hand, there are some fine drawings, notably the sheaf in the Morgan Library, and our private collectors have been royal purchasers of the prints. This is all to the good. The engravings take you to the very core of the artist, to his genius for line, to his genius for pure and noble draughtsmanship. I say "noble" advisedly. To reflect on Dürer as he stands in the wide perspective of history, to study him as the peer of the great ones of earth, is to be deeply conscious of his elevation, of the steadfastly illuminating accent which he placed upon everything that he created. He is a little puzzling where the concomitant of this loftiness, pure beauty, is concerned. Beauty never figured in his world as it did in that of either the intellectual Raphael or the sensuous Titian. If he dreamed dreams they were not dreams of marmoreal splendor or of romantic enchantment. The brooding woman of the "Melancholia" is an imaginative embodiment, yet you could say almost anything about her save that she was one of the Graces.

There was more realism than poetry in Dürer. He sought truth rather than beauty as we commonly understand it. But he sought it nobly and that tells in his line, in the power it has, rising sometimes to majesty. His was, in short, the beauty of perfect craftsmanship. It is enough for him to put forth his technical strength to thrill you. It is enough for him to draw, to outline a nude, to delineate an animal, to note the fall of a drapery or some episode in landscape. Then, straightway, in his mere touch, you feel the gesture of the great artist.

IX

FLEMISH PAINTING

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IX

FLEMISH PAINTING

I

THE GREAT LONDON EXHIBITION OF 1927

THE works of the masters are germinal forces, constantly renewing their influence upon the minds of men. If the isolated masterpiece plays this part in the world an even richer impetus is given to thought when a whole "great and glorious company" is assembled, to illustrate certain ideas and principles in their solidarity. Such a company was brought together in London, in January, 1927, when there was opened at Burlington House an exhibition of Flemish art from the Primitives to Alfred Stevens. I crossed the Atlantic to see it and received impressions which are reproduced here exactly as they were written in the columns of the *New York Herald Tribune* at the time, as constituting in some sort a record of an historic occasion. It is desirable, I think, to preserve some notes on the exhibition as an exhibition, to set down the circumstances in which this demonstration of the qualities of Flemish art in general was made particularly significant, for the affair was unique. I have known Flemish art all my life. On my first visit to Europe, years ago, I landed at Antwerp and in the museum there opened vistas which I

have been following ever since, in countless museums and churches and in private collections. I can recall some great pictures thus seen which did not appear in the London exhibition. Nevertheless, I felt when I saw that that it exposed the traits of Flemish art in their length and breadth more luminously than they had ever been exposed before, not even excepting the famous displays arranged at intervals in Belgium during the last twenty-five years. It is for this reason that it seems worth while to embody in these pages what I endeavored to make a picture of the exhibition, one indicating details of organization and installation, various aspects, in short, of what was done in honor of the subject at a special moment.

It was as early as 1922 that the project was first discussed. M. Paul Lambotte, Director of Fine Arts in Belgium, then began to talk about it with Mr. Algernon Maudslay, the Honorary Secretary of the Anglo-Belgian Union, that body which was established some time since to foster good-will between the two countries. The idea was auspiciously launched and action in favor of it was so eager and successful that $50,000 was soon raised to cover the cost. The next thing to do was to form strong committees. In Belgium, M. Lambotte gathered together an imposing group, headed by M. Hulin de Loo, the leading native writer on early Flemish art. With him there served M. Van Zype, another distinguished critic, widely known as the author of the definitive

book on Vermeer; M. Vermeylen, professor of art in the University at Ghent, and a group of museum officials, among them, down to the day of his death, M. Fierens-Gevaert. Count Carton de Wiart was one of those who looked after the interests of modern painting and sculpture in the show. In England the committee was made up chiefly of gentlemen like Sir Martin Conway, Mr. Campbell Dodgson, Sir Joseph Duveen, Sir Frank Dicksee, Sir Cecil-Harcourt Smith and Sir Robert Witt. The general secretary appointed was Mr. Maurice W. Brockwell, appreciatively remembered for his association with the historian of the Van Eycks, the late W. H. J. Weale. Certain honorary committees were also formed both in Belgium and England and the exhibition was launched under the patronage of the King and Queen of Great Britain and the King and Queen of the Belgians.

The Belgian government led off in official cooperation, assembling treasures from the museums and churches of Antwerp, Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, Mechlin, Tournai and Liege. King George lent from Windsor Castle Van Dyck's "Three Eldest Children of Charles I" and Rubens's portrait of Isabella Brant, the painter's first wife. Through the King's intervention there came also the famous wings of the "Trinity" altar-piece by Van der Goes, from Holyrood Palace, those wings which contain portraits of James III, his Queen and his son. France

saw to it that several Primitives came from the Louvre, and, with them, four leaves of the priceless "Heures de Turin." Austria sent great tapestries from Schönbrunn, gems never publicly exhibited before. From the Museum at Copenhagen the Danish government lent one of the finest of Rubens's portraits, the powerful "Yrsselius." How fully the private collections of England and the Continent contributed may be judged from the fact that the names of the owners fill most of four pages of fine type in the catalogue. Finally, the question as to where the exhibition should be held was ideally solved. The president and council of the Royal Academy rose to the occasion and gave their spacious galleries at Burlington House, a dozen of them, all of generous dimensions, and one, the long third room, the one place in the world to show the sumptuous full-lengths of Rubens and Van Dyck. There was nothing wanting to make the exhibition a success. It was perfectly hung, without any crowding anywhere. When a double line was used it was quite natural and right, because many of the pictures, especially those of the Primitives, are works on a small scale. The arrangement was wonderfully instructive. It followed chronology. The student could pursue development after development in a perfect sequence, such as probably will never be achieved again so fully, so revealingly.

One phase of the matter should be of special

interest to Americans. Thanks to Sir Joseph Duveen's presence on the committee, his intimate acquaintance with collections in the United States, and the strict standard of judgment which he applied in selecting from them, the exhibits sent from this side were uniformly of substantial value to the ensemble. I traversed them all, one by one, and I was struck by their inevitable association with the finest things there. For the sake of the record I append a list giving the names of the masters, the titles of the pictures and the names of the owners:

Roger Van der Weyden, "A Portrait of an Elderly Woman," J. D. Rockefeller, Jr.

Roger Van der Weyden, "A Portrait of Lionello d'Este," Colonel Michael Friedsam.

Roger Van der Weyden, "The Virgin and Child," estate of Mrs. Henry E. Huntington.

Roger Van der Weyden, "A Portrait of a Lady," Honorable A. W. Mellon.

Jacques Daret, "Presentation in the Temple," Edward Tuck.

Petrus Christus, "Adoration of the Christ Child," Henry Goldman.

Petrus Christus, "St. Jerome in his Studio," Detroit Institute of Arts.

Master of the St. Lucia Legend, "Madonna in the Rose Garden," Detroit Institute of Arts.

Hans Memlinc, "St. Christopher and St. Stephen," Edward W. Edwards.

Hans Memlinc, "The Blessing Christ," Mrs. A. Hamilton Rice.

Gerard David, "Madonna and Child," Mrs. Otto Kahn.

Jan Mostaert, "Portrait of Joost Van Bronckhorst," Edward Tuck.

Mabuse, "Portrait of Anne, Marquise de Veere," Mrs. S. Scott.

Adriaen Isenbrant, "Madonna and Child," F. Kleinberger.

Antonio Moro, "Portrait of a Gentleman," J. Horace Harding.

Antonio Moro, "Portrait of a Lady," J. Horace Harding.

Rubens, "Francesco IV, Fifth Duke of Mantua," Henry Goldman.

Van Dyck, "Portrait of Count John of Nassau-Siegen," Mrs. T. J. Emery.

Adriaen Brouwer, "Boors Drinking and Smoking," Colonel Michael Friedsam.

Without these pictures the exhibition would have suffered some distinct gaps. Mr. Tuck's Daret, for example—a jewel—was the only painting by that master in the show. Mr. Harding's Moros were tremendously important at their point in the chronology. All the Van der Weyden portraits were indispensable. That painter's "Virgin and Child," lent by the Huntington estate, was peculiarly welcome on account of its being brought again into association with the portrait lent by the Antwerp Museum, the portrait of Philippe de Croy, for whom both panels were produced. In short, American participation in the event was a matter for congratulations in both countries.

Incidentally, it was a good augury. It made manifest in a peculiarly vivid manner the part which our connoisseurs are playing in the field of the old masters and it foreshadowed the important rôle which those connoisseurs are certain to assume in any future exhibitions of this character in Europe.

If the reader has any wonder as to why it seemed desirable to go all the way to London to see this exhibition, the explanation is simple enough. Flemish art, especially early Flemish art, constitutes a phenomenon unique in the history of European painting. At a time when all the schools were feeling their way, more or less naïvely, toward the splendors that were to culminate in the Italian renaissance, Hubert Van Eyck, chief among the Flemish founders, burst like a portent full armed from the brow of Jove. He reached effortless perfection seemingly at a bound. He and his younger brother Jan, flourishing in the last decades of the fourteenth century and well into the first half of the fifteenth, developed a remarkable method which others also were beautifully to illustrate. After 500 years it would seem as if the art of these men should be an old story. But here is where the singularity of the whole affair is further made manifest. It is only within the memory of living men that the subject has been getting itself sifted, documented and organized. When the late W. H. James Weale, an English scholar, first touched it not so many years ago he had practically a virgin

field to cultivate.* Hence the profound interest of the London show. It assembled the evidence, I repeat, as it had never been assembled before. Burlington House, enriched by contributions from scores of distinguished sources, public and private, was transformed into something like a laboratory, in which it was possible to observe the characteristics of an historic school in the making. That is why I went to see the pictures.

Some of them I had known before, in museums or churches. Others had been known to me—and to the world at large, for that matter—only through reproductions in books or periodicals as some special student had published them. Some of the most thrilling moments I had at the show were those in which one picture or another, thus heralded in the literature of art, swam into my ken, at last revealing all its qualities. Fascinating trains of thought were started. For example, in the National Gallery there has hung since 1916 a "Christ Nailed to the Cross" by Gerard David, the central panel of a triptych. It is a grimly realistic piece, the cross laid upon the earth, the executioners at their work with callous indifference. In the foreground a little dog sniffs at a skull. The inference would be that a simple genre painter had passed that way and that if he had anything further to say he would say it in the same vein. But, the Na-

*Weale's precious book on the Van Eycks is dated as recently as 1908. Sir Martin Conway's "The Van Eycks and Their Followers" was published in 1921.

tional Gallery having lent the panel, it had for the moment rejoined to it the wings belonging to the Antwerp Museum and you saw how a different mood presided over the making of these members of the scheme. On the left were "The Just Judges," in stately array. On the right were "The Holy Women," torn by grief but making an orderly group. It was as though David wished to enclose the rude facts of the tragedy between episodes of formal immobility. His conception of the subject, so casual, so intimate, in the central panel, was brought by the wings into a monumental unity. It is significant of the habit of a school. One gained through this reconstruction of a specific work a vivid idea of the old Flemish mode of handling a problem, which was not that of the theme alone, but of a decorative altarpiece, with a quasi-architectural purpose.

I am tempted to follow the history of this picture further afield. At the British Museum, where exhibitions of Flemish miniatures and drawings were appropriately organized, I came upon a page added to the Sforza Book of Hours by Gerard Horebout in the sixteenth century. It contains a "Christ Nailed to the Cross" lifted bodily from the National Gallery panel. You were constantly being lured by the exhibition after these matters of "influence" and the like. The collection underlined nothing so much as the solidarity of the Primitives, in method, in style, in feeling. But I must turn to the fundamental motives

of the early Flemish painter, seen in a broad perspective.

II

THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVE

He was, primarily, a religious interpreter. Going through this exhibition you were soon struck by the complete absence of the secular theme—apart from portraiture—from the fifteenth-century cosmos. I thought I had discovered signs of it when I encountered a little shallow panel of voluble, gesticulating "Jews and Roman Soldiers," by Hans Memlinc, a study of expression and gesture, a page from life. But this, too, turned out to be unmistakably part of a religious composition, the fragment of an "Ecce Homo." No, the artists of Flanders were clearly well aware of what was expected of them when they fashioned their designs for the Dukes of Burgundy. Life might be never so lusty, the painters might be never so responsive to the love their princes had for ornate, luxurious things, but their tribute of invention and polished craftsmanship was nevertheless essentially one dedicated to Holy Church. I found myself constantly reflecting on the steadfast piety of that age, its true spiritual force and at the same time its extraordinary humanness. The difference between the North and the South strongly asserts itself. Italian mysticism is rapt, poetic, and, by the same token, sensuously impassioned. Renaissance visions of para-

THE THREE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE

FROM THE PAINTING BY HUBERT VAN EYCK IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR HERBERT COOK

dise are, among other things, visions of corporeal beauty. Flemish mysticism fuses an unearthly emotion with the earthly fact—and takes the latter exactly as it finds it. The sensuous note is unheard of amongst the founders. For a long time Flemish art remains curiously austere.

It is stiff, as though with the rigidity of Byzantium, in the group of early school pieces that appeared on the threshold of the exhibition, and, save for a certain lacquer-like richness of color, almost bleak. But Hubert Van Eyck, the glorious Hubert, properly opens the subject, with the famous "Three Marys at the Sepulchre," from Sir Herbert Cook's collection at Richmond. It is of the earlier period of the master, dusky in tone, the light of nature in it keyed to a portentous solemnity. In the composition you see foreshadowed the arrangement of the major panel in the "Adoration" at Ghent. In the saturation of the design with sacred feeling lies the key to perhaps the greatest phase of Hubert's genius. It is in the overlaying of solemnity upon the tangible elements of a scene painted as though actually observed that he works his magic. The angel above the sepulchre lifts a benign hand toward the women who stand or kneel in almost matter-of-fact attitudes. The sleeping soldiers lie in a kind of brutish abandon. Beyond, the landscape leads to a towered city that Van Eyck must have built from his imagination, but it leaves an impression as of something seen. His

Jerusalem seems the portrait of a place. It is compacted of reality, and so is the whole picture. Yet it touches the heart with a sense of divine things. That, in a nutshell, is the secret of the Flemish Primitives.

They painted well, both because they could see and because they could feel. Their work is full of what you may begin by calling realism, but you end by recognizing in it something finer, something innately noble. They give you devout emotion wedded to a truth that seems familiar, but is somehow purer, more touching, than mere observed fact. They carry fact to a higher power through sheer intensity of expression.

In striking contrast to the "Three Marys" was a "St. George and the Dragon," only "attributed" to Hubert, but none the less significant of him. The "Three Marys" has grandeur—a deeply characteristic trait of Hubert's. The "St. George" is a tiny panel which calls for the use of a magnifying glass. But the marvellous delicacy in the subsidiary details is somehow suggestive of the great man's hand. Jan Van Eyck was similarly illustrated both in the largeness and the minute exactitude of his style. The renowned portrait of his wife, from the Bruges Museum, stood for the former aspect of the subject. Modest enough in dimensions, it is yet a big thing in its simple, four-square realization of the sitter. She is placidity itself, a self-contained, self-respect-

ing Flemish dame, full of dignity in her dark red, fur-trimmed garment, above which the white headdress is sustained by odd, horn-like projections, to fill out a harmony as restrained as one of Holbein's —or of Whistler's. It is, yes, big in style, but again an incomparable delicacy makes itself felt, especially in the subtle modelling of the face. There were otherwise, of Jan's handiwork in the exhibition, three religious subjects unquestioningly given to him and a fourth only attributed. One of the authenticated pieces was a gem-like Madonna, the "Madonna of the Fountain" from the Antwerp Museum—a little illumination in blue, red and gold—another a small panel from Lord Northbrook's collection. But, after the portrait, I would cite the enchanting "St. Barbara," again from Antwerp, in which the figure is set against a great lacy tower. In the refinement of the architectural drawing and the exquisiteness of all the other details this sums up the supernatural dexterity of the Van Eycks.

I have touched rather closely upon them because they were in a sense the heroes of the exhibition. The distinction of the brothers lies not only in their intrinsic powers, but in the stamp they placed upon Flemish art. For generations after them their idiom prevailed—the unification of design through the enframing of the figures in architecture; the establishment of an almost classical balance in that design; the ever so subtle, nearly imperceptible, elongation of

the figure; a tendency to a vertical, linear effect; the alliance of a veritable luxury of decoration and color with a central simplicity. Temperaments were bound to vary as the school was strengthened by this or that man of genius, but in the broader elements of style that school is all of a piece. It is held together, also, by two potent factors. One is the depth of religious emotion to which I am bound to return again and yet again. The other is what I can only describe as a supreme standard of workmanship. The hypothesis of the old miniaturists is immeasurably developed through the power of a technique to which the oil medium gave a tremendous impetus.

There is still another great quality distinguishing the Flemish Primitives. That is their serenity, as of a fathomless spiritual certitude. They dwell in a land where it is always afternoon and never wind blows loudly. And thanks to the good judgment of the hanging committee one observed the persistence of this calm through the natural, inevitable sequence of one generation after another. The pictures were ideally arranged in chronological succession, so that one could watch the school developing, tracing the evolution of master and pupil. You passed directly from Jan Van Eyck to his disciple, Petrus Christus, a type of pastoral sweetness. He was sombre, to be sure, in an ecclesiastical portrait, but the tenderness that more characteristically marks him came out in a lovely "Nativity," lent by Mr. Henry Goldman, of New York,

St. Barbara

FROM THE PAINTING BY JAN VAN EYCK
IN THE MUSEUM AT ANTWERP

a picture lovelier, as it seems to me, than the one by him of the same subject in Berlin. A figure of outstanding interest at this point was Robert Campin, known also as the Master of Flemalle, from his village in Flanders. I looked at his work for its own sake, but also because he taught two notable painters of the school, Jacques Daret and Roger Van der Weyden. These two were finely represented. There was only one Daret in the whole vast collection, but that was a jewel, the "Presentation in the Temple," which belongs to an American living in Paris, Mr. Edward Tuck. The figures are set in an architectural fabric, which gleams like some magnificent tabernacle. The Van der Weydens were very numerous, portraits and religious pictures. Here, by the way, American participation quite materially fortified the exhibition. Colonel Michael Friedsam sent his "Lionello d'Este," Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the "Portrait of an Elderly Woman," inscribed in one corner "Persica Sibylla," which in perfection of drawing and splendor of color is one of the painter's masterpieces, and Secretary Mellon his equally puissant "Portrait of a Lady." From an American collection likewise, that of the late Mrs. Henry E. Huntington, came a "Madonna and Child," a simple design set gorgeously against a gold background.

Van der Weyden, like all the others of his school, is a man of very close, polished handling, but just once on this occasion he fairly flamed out and accompanied

his decisive hues with a fitting breadth of style. It was in a wonderful little "Pieta," brought from the Brussels Museum. In its sunset glow it brought in the prismatic brilliance of the Flemish Primitive on unusually imposing terms. As a rule their method was too deliberate, too restrained, for them to be exactly orchestral in effect. They knew nothing about the volcanic, spectacular blazes of, say, a Titian. But with all their reserve and their rather tight sense of measure they contrived to achieve a kind of quietly burning warmth. Their tints are like those of rubies, emeralds, sapphires and other precious stones, wrought into a muffled radiance. I felt this keenly before the picture of "The Mass of St. Giles," by the painter who is known, from this work, as the Master of St. Giles. The panel, belonging to Lady Seaforth, is part of a diptych, the other wing of which is in the National Gallery. From it, back in 1915, in a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries, Sir Martin Conway took his point of departure in a survey of the Abbey of Saint Denis and its ancient treasures. It is the only existing representation of the great altar in the church of the French kings. Conway speaks of it as giving the aspect of the abbey "as it were photographed in color in actual use." That is what a picture of this kind does, it brings back the past in all its living beauty. The altar shines with the richness of solid gold. There were great things all about this picture. You found it in

the company of many Memlincs, and these threatened to overpower it with their airy spaciousness and their searching sentiment. I found it hard to leave the Memlincs—great compositions like the "Madonna and Child With Saints and Donors," lent by the Duke of Devonshire, or such a richly hued, naturalistic piece as the Brussels "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," or a miraculous portrait like the "Spinelli" from Antwerp. They held me, as did the mingled subtlety and force of Hugo Van der Goes. But I was always coming back to the Master of St. Giles. In its historic status and through its flashing color his picture made an irresistible appeal, one particularly representative.

As you left it, proceeding up through the latter decades of the fifteenth century and so into the sixteenth, Dierick Bouts took on the story, and the beguiling Gerard David, a follower of Memlinc, who, like his master, knew how to blend a gracious note with severity. But I confess that what moved me most at this stage of the historic evolution set forth was the appearance of the more naturalistic masters in Flemish landscape. The reader must imagine a transition from the rather sedate scenery which serves as a background for the figures in the earlier Primitives to a wilder, freer world, in which landscape is painted more for its own sake. It is like the change from the old static tradition of European landscape painting to the deeper, natural magic of

Ruysdael and Hobbema, carried still further by the modern masters of France. The epochal transformation is well marked in a man like Joachim Patinir, and, still later, by Pieter Breughel. The exhibition brought these painters out in prodigious form. I shall never forget what it meant, after the immobility of the founders, to be confronted by the high-piled dramatic mountain forms in Patinir's "St. Jerome in a Landscape," lent by Mr. Henry Oppenheimer. The saint is practically overwhelmed by the landscape. It is nature breaking into the Flemish consciousness with a new energy. Still, the old exclusively religious preoccupation died hard. In one of the rooms the exhibition revealed the great colorist and interestingly flexible painter, Quentin Matsys, valiantly maintaining it, and it persisted, too, in the types reflecting Italian influences, Jan Gossaert, better known as Mabuse, and Bernard Van Orley. But Patinir is the herald of a new day. With him you feel the breath of another air stirring vaguely in the school and moving steadily toward the entirely mundane developments of the seventeenth century.

I have sought in the foregoing rapid notes to summarize the history of early Flemish religious art that was writ across the walls of the London exhibition. As I look back at it I am conscious of certain salient motives belonging to the school. They drew their figures generally on a small scale and grouped them very freely, very realistically, in surroundings of a

monumental character. Architecture envelops the subject and, with it, a quiet landscape that is accented in its turn by more or less remote buildings, towered and turreted structures. Form is closely and very accurately modelled. Anatomical precision was the foible of the Flemish Primitives. The severe treatment of drapery gives it a pronounced linear effect. Where the Italian is all for flowing contours, for melting curves, his Northern colleague is, by comparison, angular. Another striking difference relates to the face of the Madonna. In the south it is often very distinctive. In the north it is ruled by strict convention and rests within almost abstract lines. The Flemish Madonna is not remarkable for individuality. Her expression is often piercingly sweet, but her traits are pretty definitely those of a formula. It is, indeed, through the force of his ensemble that the Flemish Primitive more often moves you. There he is a painter of great depth, of a powerful and even haunting quality, a master of devout revery. He gave to heaven what belonged to heaven, to earth its proper dues. In the latter matter, when portraiture was to the fore, he had an extraordinary touch.

III

THE "ADORATION OF THE LAMB"

In the foregoing notes I have touched inevitably upon the religious art in the Flemish exhibition. Before leaving that aspect of the subject I cannot but

interpolate here the record of a journey closely allied with study of it. When I left London for Paris I diverged from the usual route and crossed the Channel to Ostend in order that I might pause at Ghent and see with my own eyes the present condition of one of the world's most famous works of art. I wanted to pay tribute to the "Adoration of the Lamb," the supreme masterpiece of the Van Eycks, which lay at the back of the mind of every student visiting Burlington House during the Flemish exhibition. And thereby hangs a tale for the opening of which we must go back five hundred years.

Hubert Van Eyck started work upon the "Adoration" probably in 1415 and was busily engaged upon it when he died, in 1426. It was completed by his younger brother, Jan, in 1432. It is an altar-piece with shutters. The interior is divided into two zones. In the lower the "Adoration" is represented, the mystical Lamb of God standing upon an altar with blood falling from his breast into a crystal vessel. Saints and angels, popes and kings, are grouped with almost rigid symmetry at points not too close to the altar. The landscape, as usual with the Van Eycks, is topped in the background with picturesque towers. Above, in the centre, Christ is enthroned, with the Virgin seated in the panel on His right and St. John the Baptist in the panel on His left. In subsidiary panels there are groups of angelic musicians, the figures of Adam and Eve, etc. The four compartments of the

three zones into which the exterior is divided contain divers saintly and other figures, as well as the portraits of Jodoc Vyt and his wife, Elizabeth Borluut. Scholarship has sought in vain to determine just where the work of Hubert leaves off and that of Jan begins, but the bulk of the altar-piece is pretty certainly to be attributed to the former. Nothing else in Europe is quite like this fabric. In its mystical spirit it whispers—to adopt Matthew Arnold's phrase—the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, the religious rapture in it marvellously tempered by the realistic habit of the Northern painters. In craftsmanship it is stupendous.

That Jodoc Vyt gave the original commission for the altar-piece is questioned by Weale, but it is at least certain that he was the ultimate purchaser and that by him the polyptych was presented to his parish church, now the Cathedral of St. Bavon. There it remained, above the altar in the Vyt Chapel, from 1432, when it was inaugurated, until 1566, when it was removed for safety during the Calvinist outbreak. It was in some peril, nevertheless, at this time. It is said that it narrowly escaped falling into the hands of Queen Elizabeth in return for moneys which she had advanced to the Calvinist leaders. Not until 1584 was it brought back to the cathedral, and it took three years more to return it to its old place in the Vyt Chapel. Its history thereafter remains quiet for a long time. In 1781 Joseph II

appears to have been scandalized by the nudity of Adam and Eve and on a hint from him the panels containing them were removed. They were thus exiled by prudish scruple to an obscure cupboard until 1860, when they were purchased by the Belgian government and deposited in the museum at Brussels.

To revert to the body of the altar-piece, its fortunes took another turn in the turmoil of the French wars. In 1794 the four central panels were "lifted" and exhibited in Paris. The six shutters remained in Ghent, and if fate had not been strangely malign they would have been restored to their association with the central panels when, after the Battle of Waterloo, the latter were brought back. But, as Mr. Weale pathetically remarks, "owing to the general dislike of shutters," the opportunity to reconstruct the unity of a masterpiece was neglected. Indeed, during the absence of the Bishop, who was an enlightened man and would have known better, the Vicar General and the church wardens got hold of one Nieuwenhuys, a dealer, and sold him the shutters for 3,000 florins. He quickly turned them over at a good profit. Mr. Solly, the English collector, paid him 100,000 francs for the shutters, and he in his turn did very well with them, selling them to William of Prussia for 400,000 francs.

This triumph of the Van Eycks has thus in modern times been divided into three parts. The central panels stayed in Ghent. Six of the shutter panels—

split, so that both sides could be exhibited at once—adorned the museum at Berlin. The Adam and Eve remained at Brussels. When the Great War broke out and Germany made it plain that treasures of art were to be annexed on a systematic plan, every observer of artistic affairs recalled the vicissitudes to which the "Adoration" had been exposed and wondered anxiously if they were to be renewed. Wonderment was tinged with a special solicitude when it was learned in 1914 that the Adam and Eve had been removed from Brussels to Berlin, under the particular supervision of Dr. Bode, and not all the German talk of "safeguarding" works of art could quite dissolve fears that covetous eyes were once more upon the "Adoration." It was cheering in those days to hear that the precious panels at Ghent had been hidden away in safety. And about this time art critics in the Allied countries began a campaign for the ultimate reunion of all the scattered parts of the altar-piece.

Art critics are notoriously of a peaceable disposition. They never have anything to do with the settlement of military conflicts. But in this case they "did their bit," and it was in fact because of the relation of the craft to the reconstitution of the picture aforesaid that I went to Ghent. Back in the dreadful years I was often busy explaining just how, and with what particular paintings, Germany could pay part of her indemnity. Ransacking the museums at Ber-

lin, Munich, Dresden and so on, I figured out some tremendous passages in a proper liquidation of the debt. I venture to insert here a fragment from one of these pleas:

Every one who cares for the masters has some pet plan for German restitution after the war. My own special hope is that Berlin will not only be compelled to return the Adam and Eve, but may also have to pay over to Belgium, as part of the indemnity, the Van Eyck panels long preserved in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. To assemble in the cathedral at Ghent once more all the scattered parts of the renowned polyptych of the "Adoration of the Lamb" would be a peculiar solace to the burghers of the town. Connoisseurs throughout the world would hail it as a work of fitting reconstruction.

The Treaty of Versailles no doubt contains a lot of excellent reading, but for the art critic its golden page is that one in Part VIII, dealing with reparation, which bears—in Section II, Article 247—these momentous words:

Germany undertakes to furnish to the University of Louvain, within three months after a request made by it and transmitted through the intervention of the Reparation Commission, manuscripts, incunabula, printed books, maps and objects of collection corresponding in number and value to those destroyed in the burning by Germany of the Library of Louvain. All details regarding such replacement will be determined by the Reparation Commission.

Germany undertakes to deliver to Belgium, through the Reparation Commission, within six months of the coming into force of the present treaty, in order to enable Belgium to reconstitute two great artistic works:

1. The leaves of the triptych of the Mystic Lamb, painted by the Van Eyck brothers, formerly in the Church of St. Bavon, at Ghent, now in the Berlin Museum.

2. The leaves of the triptych of the Last Supper, painted by Dierick Bouts, formerly in the Church of St. Peter at Louvain, two of which are now in the Berlin Museum and two in the Old Pinakothek, at Munich.

In January, 1919, reviving the plea for the reconstitution of the altar-piece, I asked: "Has not the hour struck at last for this perfect consummation? Cannot it now be brought about on the proper scene for the profit of the Belgians and thereby of the world at large?" The hour did strike and the date is historic, one to be recorded with profound joy in the present sketch of the subject. On July 12, 1920, the Berlin panels were received from Germany at Ghent. The exact day will be carefully noted by lovers of the Van Eycks, because it was not until August 3, 1920, that the Belgian section of the Reparation Commission made official announcement that the integrity of the "Adoration" had at last been restored, and the two dates might easily be confused. It was on July 12, 1920, that the great event occurred.

Does the reader wonder at my going to Ghent? I saw the altar-piece between masses, with their solemnity in the air. It was a gray Sunday morning, but the light was not too gray, and as luck would have it I had the old chapel to myself most of the time. I could muse over the glorious work in quiet happiness. The immemorial spell of the great picture worked its will and I submitted to its power with a peculiar thankfulness. How beautiful it is! The Renaissance masters exert, perhaps, a more poetically penetrating sway. Their beauty is more subtle, more elusive, and, possibly, deeper. There is, too, for me, always a somewhat disconcerting element in the grand architectural scheme of the "Adoration." It lies in the two standards of scale adopted. The figures in the main composition are to be measured in inches. Those in the upper zone are of life size. The leading motive in the design has thus, as regards scale, something of the comparatively minor status of a predella. Yet such is the force of genius—and of a technical wizardry beyond all explication—that a dubiety of this sort presently recedes and all you think of is the conquering splendor of the thing.

It searches out your soul, and as it does so it ravishes the eye with its subdued greens, its soft reds and, in its more decorative passages, its restrained magnificence. The robes of the three personages dominating the upper zone, blue, red and green, are very rich, very powerful in effect. Hubert was a

mighty painter, a great man of his hands. But he had a tender spirit, too. This majestic altar-piece is wonderfully touching, irresistibly provocative of a devout mood. Under the pressure of its mystical ideas, its grave nobility, its serene beauty, spiritual and artistic, it is impossible to be in its presence and not feel sympathy for all things gentle and magnanimous. Nevertheless I do not see how anybody can blame me because, with the history that I have summarized in this essay drifting through my mind, I felt also an emotion of exultation. There stood the sublime work of the fates. After all manner of adversities the glorious, full-rounded conception of the Van Eycks had come home into safety. I came away with newly enkindled thoughts of them and of good Jodoc Vyt.

IV

THE EARLIER PORTRAIT PAINTERS

I counted about fifty early portraits at Burlington House. All of them denoted the solidarity of a school, technically and in the conception of a subject. In respect to the latter, I could not but feel the reaction upon old Flemish portrait painting of the religious preoccupation prevailing amongst all the pioneers. It is as if the artist, commemorating burgher or patrician, confronted by luxurious costume and all the attributes of mundane aggrandizement, nevertheless saw his sitter as though through

a monastic window. Partly, I suppose, this was due to the actual play of circumstance, to the constant association of the man who commissioned an altar-piece with the picture itself. If the donor was not represented kneeling at the feet of the Madonna then his features appeared upon a collateral panel. Over and over again you observe this intimacy established between the pictorial subject and its "onlie begetter."

Consider, for example, the brilliant "St. Victor and a Donor," by Van der Goes, lent by the Corporation of Glasgow. The armored saint, grasping shield and spear, stands erect, a splendidly martial presence. Beside him kneels the donor, with hands joined in prayer. Master and man, so to say, are grouped by Hugo as he might have posed two of his contemporaries—which no doubt is precisely what he did—against the spacious landscape in the background. The moods expressed in the faces had to harmonize. Always, whether thus joined in companionship or portrayed in separate panels, the moods were bound to be harmonized. Hence the peculiar, almost ascetic gravity which I have noted as the salient factor in Primitive Flemish portraiture.

It was interesting to encounter instance after instance of the old personal alliance between the church and its worshippers. Sometimes it was renewed after long separation. One of the Van der Weydens was a lovely little panel, "Madonna and Child," lent from

America by the estate of the late Mrs. Henry E. Huntington. To fall into proximity with it after generations there was waiting from the Antwerp Museum the portrait of Philippe de Croy, for whom the diptych was painted. Happily, in other cases picture and portrait have remained united. It has been so with a masterly diptych of Hans Memlinc's, from the Hospice de St. Jean, at Bruges. Across the centuries, side by side with the "Madonna and Child," Martin Van Nieuwenhoven has murmured his devotion. I find it hard to relinquish this motive of religiosity interpenetrating early Flemish portraiture because, quite apart from the association of ideas involved, there is a tincture of the same monastic ideal in the very grain of the style and workmanship of these pictures.

It was powerfully fostered by the plastic antecedents of Flemish painting. One of the features of this extraordinarily educational exhibition was a company of fifteenth-century statuettes and groups, carved chiefly in wood. They pointed vividly to the sculptural origins of the school of painting. This is nothing if not sculptural in its effects. A representative Flemish head is modelled with the brush very suavely, no doubt, but with a simplification of the planes such as is wrought with the chisel. They are very broadly and boldly defined. The suavity comes out in the modulations of form lying within the grand areas. Head and face are blocked out in a

solid, monumental way. The hands appear in a kind of chill relief, amazing hands deserving a chapter by themselves. Draughtsmanship of a fairly heroic order completes the magical formula. A portrait emerges that makes you think at once of a Roman bust and a Renaissance medal.

At the same moment thought of the Renaissance causes me to revert to a striking difference. A certain exquisite grace is characteristic of the Italian masters. Sometimes, to be sure, as in the case of a man like Mantegna, painting the great "Mezzarota" at Berlin, the note is specifically antique. But as a rule there is imported into even the weightiest of Renaissance portraits an essentially decorative element. A Botticelli, for example, will bring to his portrait of either man or woman a light, rhythmic play of line. Both in line and in color the typical Florentine profile is enchanting as so much decorative pattern. It is only seldom so with the Flemish portrait. I vaguely perceived a decorative purpose in the first outstanding portrait in the London exhibition, a little half length of Jean sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy, from the Antwerp Museum, by some early fifteenth-century master, possibly, I think, an associate of Hubert's. There was a delicate beauty in the painting of the black costume and hat against a blue background and there was charm, such charm as belongs more often to the south than to the north. I found charm, too, in Jan Van Eyck's portrait of

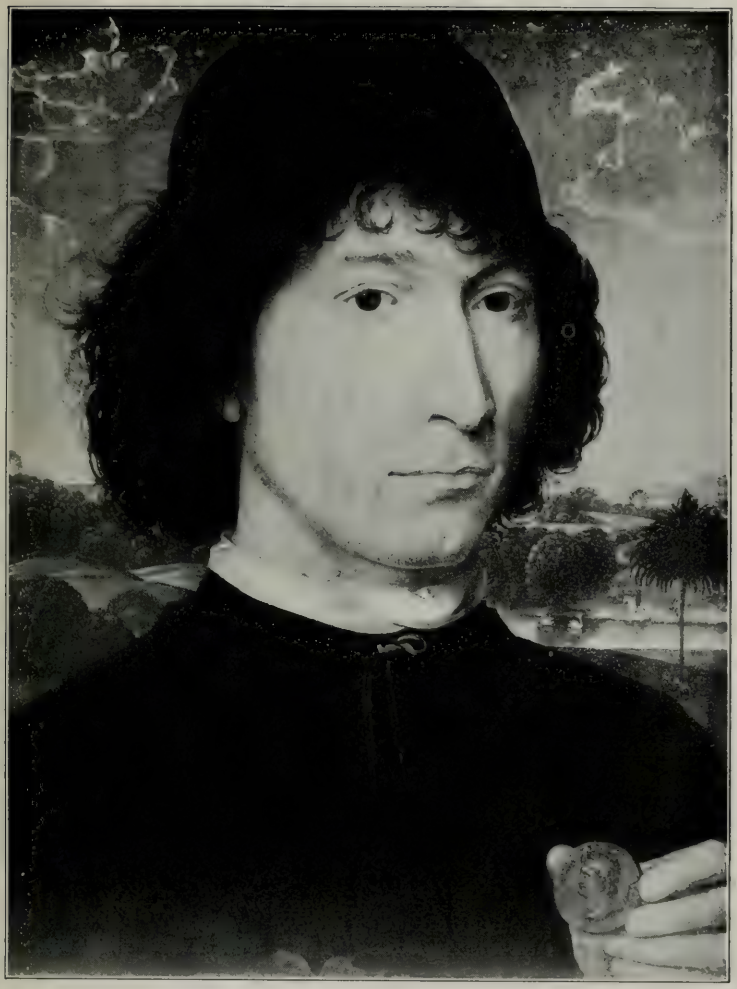
his wife, from the Bruges Museum, a beguiling arrangement in red and white. Then it was positively irresistible in the "Portrait of an Elderly Woman" by Roger Van der Weyden, lent by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. "Persica Sibylla" the last is inscribed, but the symbolism in it is swallowed up in the gracious presence of the lady and in her bright, courtly habiliments, flashing in color.

I might cite one or two other examples of sensuous lightness making its way through the difficult crust of Primitive austerity. Memlinc's "Portrait of Spinelli," from the Antwerp Museum, is a miracle of flowing draughtsmanship and alluring color. There was a winning elegance, also, about "The Painter and His Wife," by the Master of Frankfort, out of the Von Auspitz collection. Quentin Matsys has always a kind of subtle refinement signifying a tempering of Primitive severity. But it is of severity, first and last, that I think as I think of Primitive Flemish portraiture. Its churchly "high seriousness" conclusively exerts a kind of cold glamour.

That stays in my mind, that and a linear power that would alone explain the fascination of the school. How the Van Eycks and the rest of them could draw! They could model like conjurors. In the features of Jan Van Eyck's wife, in those of the spare, long-nosed, straight-lipped man of Roger Van der Weyden's portrait from Dr. Wenland's collection, you see the faint modulations of the fleshier parts and the thin integu-

ment over bony structure defined with an incomparable grasp upon the last nuance. But what first seizes the eye—and holds it to the last—is the cool precision of the line, which exposes a contour in the dry light of truth and glorifies it with beauty of style. And all these resources, all this mastery over form and color and the complexities of light and shade are dedicated to an ideal of concentrated expression. They didn't dramatize their sitters, these consummate craftsmen. They imaged them forth in the same stillness, the same immobility with which they invested their sacred themes. But they left them immortally individualized and eloquent. The vitality of the bodies they portrayed in such exactitude is also a vitality of the soul.

There is a perceptible change as you go on in the chronology. Quentin Matsys, the great Antwerp master, is an enchanting figure, with his ease, his glow, his variety, and in one of his portraits, the Earl of Radner's "Aegidius," he has a Holbeinesque dignity and force. Jan Mostaert, Mabuse and Van Orley are all impressive. Nevertheless they could not quite bend the Van Eyckish bow. They lost something of that earlier and supreme directness. They gained, on the other hand, in the matter of breadth. The scale of portraiture was extended, too, in their epoch, and as they passed in spirit from the church to the freer horizons of the secular world they made a renunciation that was, incidentally, a liberation. Antonio Moro is the commanding type at the parting of the ways in



Portrait of Spinelli

FROM THE PAINTING BY HANS MEMLINC IN THE MUSEUM AT ANTWERP

the sixteenth century, and fortunately there were half a dozen prime examples of him at Burlington House to affirm his authority. Two of the finest of them were from an American collection, that of Mr. J. Horace Harding, and Lord Spencer lent his superb "Portrait of the Painter." There is a hint of the grand style in Moro, the grand style as we know it in Holbein. He has a big way with him, a big and simple way of exposing form, and a spare color scheme of two or three powerful notes with which to carry on his stern interpretations of character. He, too, like his august predecessors, has a strong feeling for line and there is a faint echo in him of their noble gravity. But his drift is toward the more sophisticated stateliness of the court. He foreshadows the material gait of the seventeenth century. In his linear accent he may hark back to the founders, but the eyes of him look in the direction of that social pageant which was to be illustrated by Rubens and Van Dyck.

V

RUBENS AND VAN DYCK

The committee that organized the Flemish exhibition was peculiarly fortunate when the Council of the Royal Academy gave it for the occasion the spacious galleries at Burlington House. This meant, for one thing, an ideal place for a grand demonstration of what the artists of the seventeenth century could do—

Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens. The third gallery is a huge room, and such a room was needed effectively to display the productions of these masters. They used generous canvases, painted their men and women at full length, and altogether had a certain rich amplitude. The gallery in question seemed like the principal sala in some great palazzo in which a glittering court levee was being held. I thought of the memorable Velasquez room in the Prado, where one feels as if surrounded by so many tangible presences. So it was in the central room at Burlington House. Royalty held sway. Immediately on entering you perceived Van Dyck's famous triple portrait from Windsor Castle, "The Three Eldest Children of Charles I." It set the key for a most imposing procession.

The period illustrated is one definitely marking a line of cleavage between the old and modern régimes. In the former it was the function of the portrait painter to interpret a state of soul, closely though he dwelt upon ponderable appearances. I have touched in my previous notes upon the religious tincture to be sensed in early Flemish portraiture. The emphasis was placed upon a kind of supra-mundane gravity. In the era represented by Rubens and his followers you feel that the pure joy of living has come into its own. Also, you are conscious of a new release of personality. It is always, of course, personality that counts, and it had counted from the beginning, when Hubert Van Eyck made the astounding appearance

upon which I have dwelt in an earlier essay. Van der Weyden, Gerald David, Hans Memlinc, Hugo Van der Goes, Quentin Matsys—all had personality. But it was adjusted to the spirit of a school, and that, as I have shown, subsisted within certain clearly defined barriers. Rubens ushers in the epoch of genius making its own laws, responsive to tradition as it serves its purpose, but exercising in the long run an absolutely individualized power. If I were writing a book instead of a few swift notes it would be interesting to trace his spiritual ancestry and the developments through which he found himself. As it is I can only describe the apparition that he made at Burlington House.

The old phrase is the only one that answers. He is like a terrific natural force, suddenly breaking loose and transforming the face of things. For the little compact panels of the Primitives he substitutes a pervasive bigness, not only as regards mere scale but the very texture and movement of his mind. Energy is his watchword and all things must express the large ebullience of life. I recalled what my old friend La Farge used to tell me about the architect Richardson. If he drank champagne it had to come out of a magnum. If it was milk it was poured from an immense jug. Rubens was like that. He painted like a Hercules on the rampage. His vastness of outlook and his Gargantuan bravura were not exhaustively illustrated in this exhibition. For his luscious nudes mem-

ory had to go back to Madrid, and for his lordly lavishness in ceremonial-allegorical vein to the long Medici room in the Louvre. But, oddly, when you first visited the show you assumed, somehow, that Rubens was all there, he was so strong, so generously creative. Elsewhere than in the large gallery aforementioned there were quantities of his sketches in color, religious and other subjects lent by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Sir Herbert Cook and others. They showed you Rubens in little, but still a Rubens throwing off a complicated design with positive nonchalance, and you went back to the great gallery enveloped in the atmosphere of his turbulent virility. You actually tingled with it as you turned from portrait to portrait, beginning, as you entered, with the grim "Yrsselius" from the Copenhagen Museum.

His vigor was beautifully under control. The "Yrsselius" showed that, with its magisterial drawing holding the fiery handling of form in check, and there was a fine instance of his sensitive restraint in the three-quarter length of Isabella Brant, lent by King George, a delicately sumptuous portrait in black and yellow. But as a rule the imperial force of Rubens struck you with the impact of a blow, a blow with limitless strength behind it—perfectly timed. Again a notable example came from America, a type of proud *fortezza* in the "Francesca IV, Fifth Duke of Mantua," lent by Mr. Henry Goldman, a brilliant illustration of the master's invincible *brio*. There was another

striking soldierly piece in the "Don Diego Messia," owned by Mrs. Gutekunst. Rubens loved a martial theme. It invited the manifestation of all his gusto. The noble "Pieter Pecquius" from Colonel Audley Neeld is like the "Yrsselius" in that its robustness is governed, held in almost tight leash. From the Hugh Morrison collection came a marvellous "Portrait of a Lady," marvellous in the painting of the face and hands, and to round out the group was the great "Gerbier Family" belonging to Colonel Fremantle, where the Rubens of ordered design joins himself to the Rubens bent like a Velasquez or a Manet upon the recording of measurable fact. There were other things, amusing decorative projects, and a thrilling "Lioness at Play," lent by the Earl of Normanton, which in its large truth would have uplifted the heart of Barye. But I have a sad sense of inadequacy in this terse enumeration, of inadequacy to recall to my readers the headlong energy to which all these pictures testify. We are infinitely removed from the psychology of the Van Eycks and their sculptural calm, but we are, on kindred terms of technical rectitude, in the same world of Flemish passion.

It is the passion of human sympathy. Rubens, beside the Van Eycks, seems of the world worldly where they are of the communion of saints. But he, like them, puts heart and brain into his work. He could be gross, yes, but it was the grossness of a natural force. And he is individuality in excelsis, a great

man, a great artist, who speaks out "loud and bold." After him Van Dyck, his pupil, seems for a moment a little enervated, like the courtier doubled with the man of fashion, following in the wake of a courtier doubled with the man of action. Only Van Dyck, in his turn, has individuality, genius, creative power, and we forget the enervation in the contemplation of another perfection. It has the virtue, too, of acting in complete freedom from the coarser elements which hang about the *œuvre* of Rubens. In sheer elegance, indeed, Van Dyck has rather the better of his master. The fates gave him a wonderful representation at Burlington House. His portraits formed a brave company, the figures in which I venture to signalize as they appeared. At the head stood the tall "Abbe Scaglia," in black, from Dorchester House. Then came two great groups, Lord Spencer's black and red "Portraits of the Earl of Bristol and the Earl of Bedford," one of the most aristocratic things the master ever did, and Lady Louis Mountbatten's "Lord John and Lord Bernard Stuart," a harmony in white, blue, yellow and crimson. Between these two stately pictorial compositions hung the adorable portrait of "The Three Eldest Children of Charles I," from Windsor Castle, perhaps the most sweetly endearing of all studies of childhood, a delectable arrangement of amber, white and rose. Then military assertion in Lord Linlithgow's "Marchese Filippo Spinola," another in kindred vein, Lord North-

brook's "Earl of Newport," and still another, from America, in Mrs. T. J. Emery's "John, Count of Nassau Siegen."

After the men came the great ladies on whose celebration Van Dyck wreaked his talent with an even finer taste, an even loftier distinction. Lord Northbrook's "Queen Henrietta Maria," in blue and gold, was merely entrancing; a canvas high amongst those in which Van Dyck's genius is touched to a happy awakening by feminine softness and grace. The blue is of superlative loveliness, a shimmering stretch of divine color. The Earl of Radnor's "Countess of Monmouth" was another full-length, this one radiant in amber and blue. Blue once more struck the dominant note in Lord Spencer's "Penelope, Lady Spencer." I stress the point because it indicates the quality in Van Dyck which stamped practically his whole contribution to the show, his light, friendly, ingratiating touch, his courtly demeanor, his high breeding. Van Dyck carries on the emancipation—if we may call it such—forwarded before him by Moro and Rubens, the emancipation from the equable, pious sentiment of the Primitives and the launching of Flemish art upon purely worldly adventures. Both he and Rubens, of course, had abundant traffic with religious themes, traffic yielding many masterpieces, but in the portraiture through which they were so largely represented in this exhibition their secular tendencies were decisively enforced. They

are intensely racy, a circumstance excitingly recalled, I may note in passing, as regards Rubens, by the inclusion of several of his delightful landscapes, paintings curiously modern.

With Jacob Jordaens the step into the modern world is taken as though with a glad leap. His animal spirits are unquenchable. Whether he paints in pseudo-poetic vein the enticing "Pan and Syrinx," brought from the Brussels Museum, or, in terms of dignified realism, "The Burgomaster of Diest and His Wife," lent by the Duke of Devonshire, he is the forthright Fleming, his feet upon the solid earth. Is not that a clew to the development of the whole school? It went on from Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens to even more materialistic phases, to the boors of Teniers and Brouwer, to the staider domestic interiors of Gonzales Coques and the like. I felt, as I pored over these ultimate phenomena, that I had travelled into a totally different air. But the world about me had never really changed. As I have said before, the groundswell of the Flemish school is impressively stable. In different moods, under the stress of different temperaments, it produced, in different generations, nominally different results. But underlying all their mutations there persisted from the fifteenth century into the modern epoch the golden virtues of truth and sincerity, upheld by one of the noblest standards of pure craftsmanship the world has ever known.

There is not much to be said about the comparatively small group of latter-day painters who closed the display. The collection did not take account of living men like Anto Carte. Of the deceased painters represented, only a few such as Henri de Brakeleer, Baron Leys, Alfred Stevens, Felicien Rops and Fernand Knopff lift themselves above the ruck. But it is significant that even the rank and file know how to paint and there is something auspicious, too, in the fact that one of the men of the last generation, Alfred Stevens, was a remarkable technician. Eight or ten of his pictures were shown, among them a certain "Woman Knitting" belonging to Baron Lambert, of Brussels, in which he registers his high-water mark. It is a masterpiece in the manipulation of pigment, a triumph in subtly beautiful tone. It came felicitously into my vision, a thing absolutely at one with the ancient times. That is what remains in the memory as one looks back over the whole assemblage of Flemish masterpieces, a great and beautiful tradition.

X

CHARDIN

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CHARDIN

I LOVE to dwell upon Chardin and I watch with intense interest for every sign of American appreciation of that eighteenth-century Frenchman. I rejoiced when the Frick Museum acquired "La Serinette," a masterpiece, and whenever I get on the track of another Chardin in this or that collection I feel especially rewarded. Sometimes it is a second or third version of a famous example but it is always a "new" picture nevertheless. One does not talk of replicas where Chardin is concerned. He simply repeated himself and made each picture of his an original. There was nothing mechanical about his operations, either. An artist curious as to his color secrets asked him about them. He replied that he used colors but did not paint with them. "One paints *avec le sentiment,*" he went on. Patiently, slowly, with a warm and serene emotion, he developed his exquisite harmonies. A picture of his is an organic growth, a true work of creative art.

One of the things contributing to make it unique, too, is his aloofness from the régime under which he made his way. Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin, son of the king's billiard-table maker, was born at Paris on November 2, 1699. He died a man of

eighty. He was thus a lad at the time of the accession of Louis XV, and lived through the reign of that monarch's successor—lived long enough to touch hands with David, his complete antithesis. It was a tremendous span and it embraced the high tide of a movement which it would have seemed impossible for him to escape. The eighteenth century was a period compact of cynicism and artifice, light, ineffably graceful, governed by social conditions which were nothing if not tinctured by courtly taste. Chardin knew all about its charm. "La Serinette" is in the key of an urbane world. But that "sentiment" with which he painted had its origin in a totally different point of view. Of all the writers who have touched upon him, from Diderot down to the Goncourts, and M. Dayot in his magnificent folio, none has said anything truer than this sentence of Lady Dilke's: "He is not so much an eighteenth-century French artist, as a French artist of pure race and type." His roots strike deep. He is French in that he is sane, balanced, keeps his eye on the object, saturates his art in sincerity and truth. Fashion could not form him. The *fête champêtre* could not hold him. He was too simply human.

They say that he made the usual troubled start, his father looking to him for billiard-tables rather than pictures, but, as usual again, inborn instinct prevailed and he was soon busy in the atelier of one Pierre-Jacques Cazes, a painter once of some celebrity but

long since forgotten. He found a better master in Noël-Nicolas Coypel, and had some experience under Van Loo when that artist was furbishing up Primaticcio's gallery at Fontainebleau. We hear of him as a member of the Academy of St. Luke, haven of artists who, according to Grimm, "had not enough of either talent or reputation to win entrance into the Royal Academy." But that did not long content him. All the biographers relate with relish the story of his invasion of the more august institution. He set ten little paintings of still life in an anteroom for the members to see as they passed in to one of their meetings, and the merits of these works seem to have excited universal approval. They were taken for the products *d'un bon peintre Flamand,* and his début was secure. On September 27, 1725, being then in his twenty-sixth year, Chardin was cordially received into the Academy. He was identified with it all his life long, rising to official rank within its membership and ultimately dwelling in apartments in the Louvre. He was appointed "hanger" of the Salon. The king bought pictures from him. So did Frederick the Great. The Comte de Tessin in Sweden, presiding over the construction and embellishment of the royal palace at Stockholm, became the intermediary through whom the pictures by Chardin still in that country were purchased. Decidedly the master was successful—though it may be noted in passing that there was a curious disparity between his renown and his financial ag-

grandizement. Nominally, the Academy was a factor in his rise. But though he was in it he was not of it.

In the biography by Mr. Furst there is a confessedly fanciful but still very pretty picture of a quite possible scene. In it we are asked to watch "M. Chardin de l'Academie royale de peinture et sculpture dress in his best suit of clothes, see him put on a short wig . . . and go, on Sunday, the 17th of November, 1740, to Versailles, in order to be presented by M. le Contrôleur Général, to His Majesty, who had expressed the wish to see two of the painter's pictures, 'La Mère Laborieuse' and 'La Bénédicité'—both of which were examined by His Majesty and duly purchased." It is a picture legitimately to be kept in mind, for it is "in character," and supports the proper conception of Chardin as a representative figure in the eighteenth century, "arrived," officially recognized, a pillar of the epoch. But the bases of that pillar were in neither the boudoirs nor the drawing-rooms of the great—they were in the homes of the bourgeoisie and even in their kitchens.

Criticism has always been a little at a loss as to the precise date of his first explorations of those more modest interiors. He began, as I have said, with still life. When did he think of tackling the figure? Lady Dilke, weighing the rather confused evidence, is inclined to doubt the theory of his having waited until he was nearly forty. I need not pursue that obscure phase of the subject here, merely saying that the hypothesis

La Mere Laborieuse

FROM THE PAINTING BY CHARDIN IN THE COLLECTION OF JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

that he did not delay so long is confirmed by the works. They do not suggest a painter at any time hesitating about his *métier*. The same technical proficiency that gave the still lifes to the world in such excellent form, so soon, must fairly early in the painter's career have been wreaked upon figure subjects. There are too many resemblances of style and facture and color for the two categories to be widely separated in point of time. In both fields you follow him accompanied by the echo of Diderot's exclamation on Chardin's art in the Salon of 1759: "It is always nature, always truth!" And, I would add, it is always beauty, the beauty of superlative *painting*. The studies of still life perhaps most illuminatingly expose the fact, for in them the subject is so emphatically but a peg on which to hang the niceties of execution. Diderot, it is true, made much of the pure realism in them. "You could take the bottles by the neck if you were thirsty," he said. "The peaches and the grapes give you an appetite." Chardin himself was keen upon this veracity of his. One of the stories about him relates to his young days with Coypel, who asked him to paint in a gun in a hunting portrait. Chardin was deeply impressed by the solicitude his master showed for every point involved in the accurate representation of the weapon. I remember "Le Lièvre." Everything about that picture was amazingly exact, as exact as it would have been made by one of those Little Old Masters of the Dutch school whose influ-

ence upon Chardin is unmistakable. The hair was miraculously defined. The very deadness of the animal was somehow perfectly registered. But the picture also made me think of Velasquez and Vermeer in its sensuous beauty, in the brilliance with which insensate objects were metamorphosed into so much heavenly painted surface. It was so whenever he touched still life, even when he went a little outside his accustomed sphere, and, increasing his scale and dipping into conventionalized composition, challenged Oudry. When he is satisfied with a casual theme, with fruit carelessly arranged, a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, then he is in his own kingdom and brings off his *coup* with a conquering stroke indescribably exhilarating to the beholder.

I love his still life "this side idolatry," but I confess that I am even happier when he widens his range and paints "La Serinette," or "La Toilette de Matin," or "Les Bouteilles de Savon"—when he paints women and children in the atmosphere of a domesticity that is merely adorable, or when he moves below to the scullery and paints "La Fontaine" or "La Pourvoyeuse." Here the subject counts as it does not count in the world of still life, and it has, indeed, a rich historical significance. After the exclusively sophisticated and glittering pageant unrolled by Watteau, Lancret, Moreau, and the rest, it is well to forget its "silver flutes" and to foregather with the simpler denizens of eighteenth-century France, ex-

changing heartless wit for tender gentleness, a courtly carriage for the ordinary walk and demeanor of ordinary men, women, and children. The children particularly are enchanting images of a gracious and genuine life. It is a mistake to undervalue Chardin as the preserver of a social panorama. If he could afford to paint with "sentiment," we may surely afford to sympathize with what was humanly true in him, even with that which was, if you like, sentimental and anecdotic. His sweetness is "of the centre." It springs from the soul. It has the universality which belongs to great art. But it is Chardin's technique that finally validates it, his masterful grasp upon form, his sturdy brushwork, and, above all, his pure and delicately harmonized browns and grays, and supremely lovely whites. No one like Chardin for a perfect white, or gray, or rose! He culls his tints as though from flowers, yet he gives them body, splendid body, and leaves a canvas almost "fat."

It is amusing to observe the gusto with which Diderot backed him up. Hogarth's rash assertion that "France hath not produced one remarkable good colorist," only drove Chardin's countryman to an outburst of pride in him. "This man," he said, "is the greatest colorist of the Salon, perhaps one of the greatest colorists in the whole realm of art. I cannot pardon that impudent Webb for having written a treatise on art without citing a single Frenchman. Neither can I pardon Hogarth for having said that

the French school possessed not even a mediocre colorist. That is a lie, Monsieur Hogarth, that is ignorance or platitude on your part. . . . Paint better, if you can; learn how to draw, but stop writing. . . . For the last thirty years Chardin has been a great colorist."

He was a greater colorist than he was a draughtsman. I do not think he was a particularly brilliant stylist in this field. There are only a few drawings recognized as his, and in those few the line seems to me rather that of a school than that of a sharply individualized master. In portraiture, too, the slender and often doubtfully authentic testimony that exists leaves him, as to drawing, a figure of his period, chiefly. But he drew with adequacy always, and he painted not for his period but for all time. There is something very wholesome about Chardin in substance, and he is equally honest, equally enduring, in form. He paints soundly, powerfully, beautifully. Painting humble motives having naught to do with the color and movement of the fashionable world upon which the art of his period was largely dependent, he imposed himself upon that world with an irresistible gesture. He could portray a kitchen-maid with the liveliest sympathy and yet remain one of the aristocrats of his school, with a hint of the grand style in his blood. And there is no old master more vitally modern, more eloquent in our day and generation of the everlasting virtues of painter's painting.

First and last the lesson he enforces is just the lesson of consummate workmanship, yet his paintings embody a trenchant rebuke for those exemplars who fancy that manual dexterity can be profitably exercised in a vacuum. As I have endeavored to show, a penetrating sympathy was inseparable from his genius. When he delineated a child building houses of cards or blowing soap-bubbles, he was truly interested in his subject. The levities of his time, so important to so many of his contemporaries, left him cold; but for life in homespun, so to say, he had a positively enkindled feeling. And then he saw it so beautifully! If he shared anything with those sparkling contemporaries of his, it was their clairvoyance for grace, their gift for endowing any figure with a certain suavely vivacious charm. Chardin is full of charm. His pictures take you captive through their technique and they stay in the mind with a reality that touches the heart. Never in their presence can we forget that if he painted with a brush and colors, he painted also, as he said, with "sentiment."

XI

FRAGONARD

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FRAGONARD

THERE is a drawing of Cochin's in which he depicts a number of young artists busily engaged in a competition for the Prix Caylus. A stately model in full costume is seated upon the platform and behind her, against the wall, are ranged three worthies who presumably constitute the jury. The scene is enveloped in a certain formality and serenity. It expresses the very genius of the French Academy, serious, disciplined, regarding art as one of the pillars of the state. Just where and how does it impinge upon the genius of Fragonard? He was born at Grasse, not far to the north from Cannes, in 1732, when the royal institution was at the height of its power. He grew up in a world penetrated to the core by its canon of artistic integrity. Before he is thirty we find Mariette calling him a *disciple du Sieur Boucher,* which is to say a pupil of the very incarnation of eighteenth-century academic law. But even by that time he had disclosed himself as *ami de la joie et ennemi de le gêne et de la contrainte.* He absorbed in good faith much that his French pastors and masters had to teach him. Boucher passed him on to Chardin, and you can detect something of the gravity of that painter reappearing in more than one of Fragonard's domestic subjects.

But he travelled in Italy, too, where the work of Tiepolo particularly beguiled him, and the whole drift of his art is toward the elasticity which that predilection indicates. The academy helped him. It could not submerge him. Respectful, more or less, of the rules, he nevertheless painted by instinct.

It is the way of the authentic artist. Legend has it that Fragonard took to the brush "before he could draw a line." He has been charged with an incurable superficiality. You can see that readily enough in a picture like "L'Education de la Vierge," a picture in which the central figure is drawn so carelessly, with such a disregard of scale, as to decline upon the status of a doll. But when he was twenty, not yet admitted to the Academy course, he won the Grand Prix de Peinture! There must have been something in him enabling him to dispense with rule of thumb. Yet the tincture of the Academy is in him. In what way are we to account for it? Not as an element conscientiously cultivated but as one taken in through the pores, as one due to nothing more nor less than his solidarity with his time. The atmosphere of that drawing of Cochin's to which I have referred was an atmosphere of good breeding. It was in the air and Fragonard breathed it. Light-hearted, insouciant, essentially a man of improvisation rather than of thought-out-construction, he nevertheless paid tribute to the taste of his time and that was all for an ordered and polished art. He might, with his inexhaustible levity, permit

lapses in his workmanship, but he would keep it, on the whole, as sound as he could. As he happened to have a rich streak of genius in him he was, in this, uncommonly successful.

It is natural to look first to the character of his vision. It denotes a zestful interest in life. He has sentiment, and to some extent humor. A good example showing the play of both is provided in "L'Education Fait Tout," wherein a group of children amuse themselves with their poodles. Fragonard was always dipping into the simpler emotions. He repeatedly gave himself to such motives as that of "La Bonne Mère." All through his art there runs a strain of something like tenderness, his occasional deviations into the cynicism of the period leaving his central spirit untouched. That was the spirit of *frou frou,* reinforced by a vein of graceful, almost poetic feeling. His sentiment was never sickly-sweet, as the same quality became in Greuze. If there is not an exactly tonic mood about it there is, at all events, a hint of pastoral wholesomeness. Look, for example, at a picture like "La Charette de Roses," in which an impossibly delectable maiden wheels a barrow full of flowers. Is she, after all, absolutely impossible? The whole scene exhales the sophisticated air of gardening à la Marie Antoinette, but it is important to remember that that was in the key of the social movement of Fragonard's time. His flower girl is more persuasive on second thought than she is at first, be-

cause then one comes to feel more of the master's sincerity. There is another suggestive piece in "L'Hiver," in which another of his pretty maids stumbles in the snow. Remark the grace of her fall. The influence of the academy is telling there. Startled though the face may show the child to be, she must recline upon the earth with seemliness, and even with a measure of coquettish elegance. Under another hand the motive would seem factitious. Under Fragonard's its naturalism meets academic propriety half-way and the result is adorable.

The academic temper of the period might put a curb upon his vivacity, but it could not bind him within the confines of a formula. He found it hard, even in that intensely urban *monde* of his, to forget sylvan things. Nature was always creeping in. How sensitively he painted her now and then when she was his sole concern! He had a curious *flair* for landscape. I remember a "Paysage" of his, a wonderful bit of romantic interpretation, the massy ground and tree forms banked against piled-up clouds and a patch of pure sky. And I recall one little panel "Vue d'une Villa Italienne," as a positive masterpiece. The huge screen of trees on the right in it rises above a classical colonnade. For felicity in composition it would be hard to beat it, and the "natural magic" in the thing foreshadows the Barbizon school. Apropos of this picture, it may be noted that the hint of the grand style which it affords was not

fulfilled in Fragonard's work. He took mythological and religious subjects in his stride, to be sure, but never with Olympian authority. The moment he tries to be serious he veers toward the stagecraft of the academy. Witness such work as "Le Repos de la Sainte Famille." Here he is merely histrionic. The design is respectable, but it does not carry conviction. For once Fragonard is thin and specious, uninteresting for all his adroitness. The sacred Child is simply an urchin lifted out of the painter's mundane experience, the Madonna, one of his favorite models. Again, as it seems to me, he was sincere enough, seeing a devotional theme according to his lights. But his lights were those of eighteenth-century France.

In this very composition there is a disarming trace of the true Fragonard. He is thin, but not precisely hard. A kind of delicacy pulls him through. What is it that, beside Boucher, makes him seem somehow finer? It is his personality. He is more lovable, more flexible, less the stalwart academician and more the artless amateur of the art of painting. He has less science, but more gusto. He hadn't Boucher's virility, but he had an *élan* that was equally precious, and, moreover, it was an absolutely individualized possession, the secret of his inspiration, the one thing which he was predestined to give to French art. No one in that glorious company, not even the much greater Watteau, surpasses him in a delicate anima-

tion, in a sort of lightly tempered bravura. To see his art in excelsis, as it were, the student should observe some nominally unimportant fragment made, say, as a study for a ceiling. There is a subtlety about the nuances of sheer painting in one of his sketches which recalls the evanescent loveliness of music. The brush hovers and glances. We think with a chuckle of academic rules. What had they to do with this bit of sleight of hand? Other artists might plan their big designs, but Fragonard would dash them off at a stroke, secure in the technical virtuosity of a born painter. To that pure painting in his art the connoisseur must constantly return, to *frou frou* manifested in terms of consummate workmanship. He paints the portraits of two ladies of Ecouen, Adeline and Marie Catherine Colombe. He makes his approach, fixes the pose, somewhat in the manner of Boucher. But then as he tackles his problem the painter in him takes command and the resolute *enveloppe* of his master gives way to a spontaneity of his own, his portrait turning into a dazzling *tour de force*. Knowledge is at the bottom of it. Superficial as he may seem, at times, Fragonard had, notwithstanding, a consciousness of the rigor of the game, as I have indicated. But over and above the knowledge, the exactitude which tells, for example, in the foreshortening of a head, there is primarily flair, instinct, inborn power.

Indeed it is a great mistake to allow his not in-

frequently slipshod habit to obscure his sterling ability. "La Retour des Champs" offers a case in point. The *frou frou* is, as always, predominant. These are the most elegant of *paysans*. The very animals they ride are as graceful and the tree past which the little procession moves is redolent of the romance of the artist's Italian sojourns. But in this light and airy picture Fragonard is nothing if not the master of his instruments, the cunning draughtsman, the skilful registrar of movement, and, particularly, the manipulator of an amazingly polished brush. He exercised that flashing technique of his in a beautiful and luminous environment, using a refinedly sensuous palette and evoking through his pearly flesh tints, his limpid whites, his exquisite violets and grays and greens, a pageant that is as haunting as it is insubstantial.

"Frago," they called him, in affectionate diminutive, and he remains an endearing figure. He ought to have been wrapt in rose leaves all his life long. As a matter of fact when the Revolution came he fell upon evil days. David, whom he knew in his pupilage, must have befriended him for he spent the Terror unmolested at Grasse. There in his old home he sought to adjust to the walls that marvellous set of decorations which was to have gone into Madame Dubarry's house at Louveciennes, the set which ultimately migrated to the late Pierpont Morgan's London home, rested for a while in the Metropolitan

Museum and now forms a part of the Frick collection. He must have had resources. But when the storm passed it had swept most of his rich clients away. Was it David, we wonder, who found him the refuge in the Louvre in which he died in 1806? In the new Paris, the very antithesis of the Paris in which he had prospered, he was assigned to poverty and neglect. Time has restored him to his proper place. His blithe art is treasured as expressive of one of the sweetest aspects of a golden period in decorative painting. Like Chardin, that wise monitor of his youth, he is remembered not only with admiration but with feeling. No doubt he was influenced by the profligacy of his epoch. No doubt his levity was fundamental. But it was touched by something humane and softening, something that made him a painter to love.

XII

JACQUES LOUIS DAVID

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JACQUES LOUIS DAVID

In a time of artistic transition like our own, when revolutionary impulses make themselves manifest, it is interesting to look back and observe the direction which such impulses have sometimes taken, upon historic occasions. The general impression is, I think, that victory is wont to perch upon the banner of the progressive as distinguished from the reactionary, the individualist versus the academician. The "outs" have had a monopoly of virtue and wisdom. They have had to conquer mediocrity intrenched in official power. But the situation is not invariably as simple as all that, a fact by which I have been impressed in reflecting upon the career of Jacques Louis David. His name recalls memories of heroic tableaux, strange studio pieces based on remote history and myth. It is the easiest thing in the world to dismiss them as "old hat" and their creator as a pedantic type whose legend met deserved destruction at the hands of Gericault, Delacroix and the romantic movement of 1830. But the painter of "Les Sabines" was himself an innovator, a destroyer, a man of his time wiping out the levity of an exhausted régime! Born as far back as 1748, a kinsman of Boucher, he was nevertheless spiritually detached from his surround-

ings and destined completely to reverse some of the most characteristic practices of the eighteenth century. I can't say I love him for it, though, indeed, there is a sense in which his influence did not, ultimately, matter. The adorable eighteenth century came back into its own long ago and to-day criticism prizes Watteau, say, or Chardin, as among the most precious of the masters. But it is worth while to pause upon the man who for a while overshadowed them, because he was in his moments, among other things, a great painter.

His countrymen have never underestimated him. A formidable bibliography is gathered around his name, headed by the gigantic folio which was written by *son petit-fils,* Jules David, and published in 1880, an affair of nearly 700 pages, with a great collection of plates superadded in a portfolio of their own. The French commemorated him with their usual thoroughness in 1913, when a huge exhibition of paintings and drawings by him and his pupils (Ingres among them) was held in Paris. At rare intervals something of David's turns up in New York. Mr. Rockefeller bought a masterpiece of his some years ago, the stately "Lavoisier and his Wife," which now hangs in the Rockefeller Institute. It is a noble portrait, flawless in composition and pervaded by a wonderful serenity, a wonderful distinction. In the Chester Dale collection there is a handsome portrait of a man, "The Hunter." The Metro-

politan Museum received by the Fletcher Bequest, in 1917, a charming portrait of a seated young woman, "Mlle. Charlotte Du Val D'Ognes." It is significant that these American examples are all portraits, a matter to which I shall recur. The pictures are difficult to imagine as objects of the modern collector's zeal. Yet they have their place in history and if "Les Sabines" is in the Louvre, along with several other major specimens of his art, it is for a good reason. In the mausoleum-like biography to which I have referred his grandson lists the master's disciples. Their names, given in double columns of small type, fill the better part of six pages. And this is only one indication of his influence. That told not only upon painting but upon decoration, furniture and costume. When the Revolution came it turned classical, as everybody knows, and by that time David was ready to function as its high priest. The historians gave him a grimmer title; they call him a despot, and the word is just. He stood forth as an embodiment of law and order in art and as an arbiter he was implacable. But the piquant thing about his filling of the rôle assigned to him is that, at bottom, he was in harmony with something fundamental in the French genius, its intellectual integrity. "In France," a clever Frenchman has said, "the first consideration for us is not whether we are amused and pleased by a work of art or mind, nor is it whether we are touched by it. What we seek above

all to learn is, whether *we were right* in being amused by it and in applauding it and being moved by it." David was like that, inquiring and conscientious. He believed in principles of design and workmanship, what he was convinced were the right principles, and the particular turn that his mind took had what seemed to him a fairly sacred sanction. He followed his ideal with high-erected devotion—and enforced it roundabout with a rod of iron.

There is something a little amusing in his beginnings. As a child in Paris, where he was born, he had a passion for drawing and he was soon enough embarked upon an artist's career. For his first instructor he had his uncle, Boucher, and that, I maintain, means one of the oddest juxtapositions in the annals of art. He was to start his training under a master who was saturated in eighteenth-century elegance, a type of mundane artificiality whose stalwart power and keen feeling for classical motives never led him away from the central inspiration of eighteenth-century painting, its grace and its superficiality, its charm and its aridity. The young pupil, of course, did not at once know that he was in the wrong galley. For some time, indeed, he toyed with the palette and the sentiment of the period. But under Vien, to whom Boucher presently handed him over, he began to bring to the surface that austerity which was at the core of his being. Vien coached him for the Prix de Rome. He competed repeatedly but it was not

until he made his fourth effort that he won, in 1774, when he was twenty-six years old. The subject was "Antiochus et Stratonice" and his imposing treatment of it pre-figures the habit of mind which was thenceforth to mark him. At the same time that David won his prize Vien was appointed Director of the French Academy at Rome and in the following year the two set out for Italy together.

Arrived there David sat at the feet of curiously diverse masters, Michael Angelo on the one hand and Domenichino on the other, Raphael in one moment and Guido Reni in the next. But it was above all by Raphael that he was moved, edified, and confirmed in his natural predilections; it was by Raphael that he was drawn closer and closer to the genius of the classical past. Among the many passages of David's writing that his grandson prints there is a notable dithyramb on the Prince of Painters—*Raphael, homme divin, c'est toi qui par degré m'élevas jusqu'à l'antique.* In that was his guiding star, *l'antique.* It is somewhat difficult to make out the precise reasons for his subjection to that motive. On the whole, he seems to have suffered a kind of inner illumination, to have developed through his imagination, and half unconsciously, the hypothesis that antiquity was "right." When he painted "Les Sabines" and objection was brought to *la nudité de mes héros* his retort was merely that the usage among the painters, sculptors, and poets of antiquity

was to show their characters in the nude. It had been done in the golden age, and the golden age could do no wrong. But besides this childlike faith in precedent David was temperamentally attuned to it and the most important thing to remember in approaching his illustrations to antique literature, his "Sabines," his "Brutus," his "Horatii," is that they were painted out of an impassioned sincerity, with an ardor that had in it an animating power.

Those pictures have to this day a certain dramatic energy, a certain force. Then, too, design is there, true, well balanced, thoroughly French design, fortified by a high order of draughtsmanship. I do not blink the central error in them, the error of reconstructing old tableaux on external theory, with one eye on the statuesque side of antiquity. In his effort to make his art plastic David involved it in convention and his classicism, for all its fervor, inevitably leaves us cold. But there remains that fervor, that sincerity of which I have spoken, that driving force, and there remains—for the spectator—the duty of searching out the human creature behind his pompous stagecraft. You begin to apprehend him a little more sympathetically when you follow his doings on the return from Italy, and, before very long, his participation in the Revolution. He strode like a man into the conflict. In 1792 he was elected to the Convention. He became the friend of Robespierre, gained some prestige thereby, and, with the turn of

the wheel, shared in the repercussions of his leader's downfall, tasting captivity. The point I would stress is that he rose to the exigencies of his time, was as deeply touched by the emotions of that great upheaval as though he had never in his life had an academic thought. I know nothing more poignant than his sketch of Marie Antoinette in the tumbril on her way to the guillotine, an outline drawn as he watched from the window of his fellow Representative, Jullien. No mere antiquarian could have achieved such stark pathos. If you want realism, fairly vibrant realism, look at his profile of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, another actor in the Revolutionary drama. Or at that grisly picture in the Brussels Museum, the famous "Marat Mort." It has, to our modern eyes, an ordered, academic simplicity, but it was brought forth with a fierce vigor out of the very murk and turmoil of a volcanic epoch. Jules David tells how the picture came into being. Guiraud, orator of the deputation that came to address the Convention on the death of the patriot, uttered in the course of his remarks, a direct appeal: "Where art thou, David? Thou hast transmitted to posterity the image of Lepelletier, dead for *la patrie.* There remains another picture to be made." The painter's response was immediate. *Je le ferai!* he exclaimed. That was in the summer of 1793. In the autumn of the same year he could report to the Convention that his work was done and we have his own words to

suggest the mood in which it had been carried out: "The people asked for their murdered man back again, longed to look once more on the features of their truest friend. They cried to me, 'David, take up your brush, avenge Marat, so that the enemy may blanch when they perceive the distorted countenance of the man who became the victim of his love of freedom.' I heard the voice of the people and obeyed." Thus the melodramatic speech begins and it terminates on an equally rhetorical note, *Je vote pour Marat les honneurs du Panthéon!*

I refer to the origins of the picture in order to emphasize their emotional aspect, to indicate the actuality of which David was capable. This man in whom *l'antique* was ingrained was also a man of feeling and of truth, the spontaneous and even glowing spokesman of his contemporaries. This organizer of archæological tableaux was, in his way, as impressionistic as Degas, and had far more tumultuous passions. It is an odd paradox, one that is even a little disconcerting, especially as the years go on, the Revolution dies down, Napoleon intervenes, and a new dispensation takes David within its scope. There is something peculiarly appropriate to the temper of the old Spartan in the terse wording of the decree which marks his establishment in Imperial favor: *Nous avons nommé et nommons Monsieur David notre premier Peintre. Napoléon.* He was through with politics by that time, 1804, and, in a measure,

he was withdrawn from his communing with antiquity. He painted the "Coronation" and the "Distribution of the Eagles," immense theatrical affairs, rather showy, and, if you like, academic. But there is life in them and especially there is the interest of powerful portraiture, a phase of the subject to which all along I have been impatient to return.

David the picture-builder "dates," in spite of all his merits, and even when he injects something like naturalistic movement into a design, as in the "Distribution of the Eagles," that sense of the artfully arranged tableau to which I have so often alluded will somehow revive. But David the portrait-painter is another type altogether, one fitted to develop a delightful *rapprochement* between classical dignity and the actuality so potent in the "Marat Mort." One proof of his validity in portraiture lies in the extent of his range. That embraces the aristocratic elegance of the "Lavoisier and his Wife" or the resplendent "Comte Potocki" and the bourgeois simplicity of "Le Conventionnel Gerard et sa Famille." He could pass from the courtliness of his earlier "Caffieri" or the intensely eighteenth-century portrait of his relative "M. Demaisons," to the intimate and psychologically haunting "Bonaparte Ier Consul," an unfinished masterpiece, and to divers studies of comparatively humble stage folk. Whatever he does in portraiture has life, character, distinction, and, to use another epithet I have used before, force, always force.

There was nothing juiceless about him, and, I may add, there was nothing wanting to his technique. His portraits are beautifully painted. They seem to lift him above his classical preoccupations and to give an added brilliance to his brush as they give an added stimulus to his mind. The preoccupations persisted, no doubt. When the Napoleonic fabric melted away and David found it convenient to settle in Brussels, where he died, in 1825, with no more of the Imperial figures to paint, you find him designing a monumental "Mars et Venus" with all the enthusiasm of his early Roman dedication to pagan story. But if the flair for the tableau lasted, so did the instinct for life, and David's art down to the end has in it a strangely persuasive vitality.

It is the mark of the great artist, the man of authentic gifts, who triumphs even over a mistaken obsession, even over that dogmatic, disciplinary point of view which we characterize roughly, as academic. If I have lingered briefly over the incidents of David's career it has been partly, I must confess, because he confirms so decisively a favorite hypothesis of mine, that no artist with stuff in him was ever snuffed out by the admittedly meretricious influence of a formula, a movement. The artist comes before the movement, the school. They do not create him, but he makes and dominates them, and this is true even when, as in the academic throng, a man arises who is nominally an exemplar of an immemorial

tradition. If he has genius it is simply a case of his taking his good where he finds it, as the French say. He may adopt an old garment, finding it fits him, but he wears it with an independent air. Witness the act of Raphael, coming upon the antique marble group that is in the library at Siena and basing on it the lovely little "Three Graces" at Chantilly. He echoes the marble, he echoes Perugino, his master, too, but he is unmistakably Raphaelesque. He, too, was an antiquarian, stirred, as was the whole Italian Renaissance, by the classic past. He, too, was "academic." But the decorations of the Vatican, and the Sistine Madonna, miracles of design, have in them the inspiration that springs only from heart and soul and brain. How heavily Bramante rested upon classicism and how nobly he used it to his own ends in the Cancelleria and other immortal buildings! Consider our own Gilbert Stuart, a child of the eighteenth-century British tradition. He had "academic" affiliations and sometimes they gripped him hard. He drew on French as well as English formula. For his "Lansdowne Washington" he borrowed a design of Rigaud's. But the essential Stuart is a man of personal power, a born painter. So it was with Jacques Louis David. His best work—and it is axiomatic that a man must always be judged by his best—is merely superb. It is a reminder of one of the first principles in the appreciation of art, never to traffic with labels but to pierce beneath the surface to what is natural

and truly characteristic of a man. David's classical pictures disclose genius hampered and almost smothered. His portraits are those of a free, puissant master. The despot has been dethroned. The great painter remains.

XIII

SOME DISCURSIVE REFLECTIONS ON INGRES

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THE first souvenir of Ingres, in color, that I ever saw in this country was a copy of his "Roger and Angelica" that was in the hands of the late Frederick Keppel many years ago. It was the oddest souvenir in the world, for this copy was one made by Whistler! In a measure I could comprehend how he had happened to make it. When as a young man he went to Paris circumstances seem to have guided him, mysteriously, to the *atelier* of Charles Gleyre, a passionate disciple of Ingres. His admonitions may easily have turned momentarily into a classical channel the energies of the American who was presently to have brief traffic with the naturalism of Courbet, and then was to invent the Whistlerian hypothesis. Memory of that copy was to come back to me long afterward on a piquant occasion. In the course of a conversation with Whistler in London, one night, I spoke of the great portrait of Bertin by Ingres. To my astonishment the former copyist of the master flatly denounced this portrait. It was no better than a Meissonier, "showing all the buttons on the coat," and Ingres was simply "a bourgeois Greek." In the *ana* relating to Ingres there are endless episodes of this sort. Take the attitude of his rival, Delacroix. In

his "Journal" you will find a distinctly appreciative note on that very picture that Whistler copied. *Ingres charmant,* he says. But in the same book you may learn what he thought of an exhibition that his contemporary made in 1855. He found it "the complete expression of an incomplete intelligence." In his "Conversations in Ebury Street," that penetrating critic George Moore revived the old disparaging strain, giving us this passage: "Though Ingres's portraits are often very like their sitters, the absence of what is known in the studios as quality causes us to turn away from them with a feeling of disappointment." So much for the malcontents. And now what of the other side of the medal?

In France he has been pretty nearly canonized. Henry Lapauze, the most devoted *Ingriste* of them all, published a great collection of facsimiles of his drawings, wrote the definitive biography, and made divers other contributions to the literature of the subject. Leon Bonnat was an assiduous collector of his works. Degas worshipped his genius. A superb exhibition of more than two hundred examples was held in Paris in 1921, and the event was hailed with acclamation. There is an Ingres cult in central Europe. A sumptuous book about him was made by Fröhlich-Bum, of Vienna, and he took as his motto the fine saying of Gautier—*Il n'est pas de son temps, mais il est éternel.* Ingres has even been paid the homage of adoption into the Modernist fold. When

the propagandist of that singular movement wishes utterly to convince you he remarks in casual, quite confident fashion, as though it really went without saying, that Matisse stems from Ingres and that Picasso is one of his chief followers. That looks very like body-snatching to me, and, indeed, one reason why I recur to Ingres is just this misunderstanding that so often comes athwart his tradition. I am myself a confirmed *Ingriste*. I have been to Mecca, which is to say I have journeyed to the sanctuary at Montauban in which a great mass of the painter's work is preserved. In short, I have been devoted to Ingres all my life and I resent the presumption which in the name of one of the austerest disciplinarians in the service of beauty would dedicate bad workmanship to a cult for ugliness. It is always apposite to talk about Ingres and it is doubly legitimate to do so when the principles for which he stood are in peril. Never was there greater need than there is to-day for contact with the crystalline waters of inspiration that lie in his art.

It is an art akin to that of Landor in poetry and Gluck in music in that it proceeds out of emotion, but is restrained by classical feeling. It is an art like theirs, too, in that the fire of genius burns behind it, burns authentically but so to say discreetly, with the hard, gem-like flame of which Walter Pater made so much. I have always been fascinated by the contrast between the portraits of Paganini made respectively

by Delacroix and Ingres. Both artists were susceptible to music, Ingres being himself a capable violinist. Each, I take it, justly portrayed his man. But Delacroix's Paganini is a romantic apparition, seen in a vague penumbra. The virtuoso drawn by Ingres is set forth in terms of cool, lucid, totally dispassionate statement. Both are eloquent not only of the subject but of the artist. With Delacroix the force present is that of the imagination. With Ingres it is calmly cerebral; he thinks rather than feels. This it is, it seems to me, which accounts for the rather restricted effect of his pictures, to distinguish them sharply from his portraits. *Ingriste* though I am, I make no pretense of regarding his pictorial compositions as among the great masterpieces in the world. They have dignity and grace, a kind of monumental power. The famous "Apotheosis of Homer" in the Louvre has something like majesty about it, and in the imposing decoration at Dampierre Ingres succeeded in tincturing majesty with a pastoral charm. It was not for nothing that this follower of David was also an inheritor of the tradition of Poussin. He shared to a certain extent in the heroic gesture, the spacious manner of that master. He knew above all how to build up a great design, and it is worth noting that while he revered Raphael, he cared more for the magnificent orchestration of the decorations than he did for the sublime sentiment of the Madonnas. Nevertheless, I feel that the grandeur of Ingres comes out

more in his handling of form than in his deployment of a number of figures on a single canvas. In the matter of form alone his pictures vie with his portraits, so that a work like "The Bather" or like "The Odalisque," both in the Louvre, have the serene full-rounded perfection of a Greek marble.

There is, to tell the truth, much of the spirit of the antique in Ingres. He collected Greek objects and drew from them. A few years ago there turned up, from the collection of Arthur B. Davies, a little composition having extraordinary interest for the student of Ingres. It was a picture of "Europa," dating from 1865, less than two years before his death. Executed in water-color, a medium rather infrequently encountered in the *œuvre,* it is one of the loveliest of his drawings. The touch is not precisely the touch of his prime. There is not so much nervous force apparent beneath it. But the old power is still there, the power of an instinctively great draughtsman. If the stroke is not quite so swiftly decisive, it is possible, moreover, that Ingres was influenced by his original. One of the notable things about this water-color is its indication of his affection for the antique and the intercourse that he had with it.

In the will that he drew up in the summer of 1866 he cites more than one Greek object, vases among them, and ten years earlier, in a letter written from Meung to Armand Cambon, in Paris, he asks his friend to send him a tracing from the "Apotheosis

of Hercules" on a Greek vase. The "Europa" originated in similar research. Delaborde records it in his catalogue, among the *compositions dessinées,* describing it as executed "after a composition traced upon a Greek vase." Ingres, he adds, had written the following lines at the base of the drawing: "Pliny speaks of a picture by Antiphyle which represents Europa; perhaps this composition is itself an imitation of this celebrated work or of another by the painter and sculptor Pythagoras." Reading the legend on the water-color one is carried back to the studious Ingres, the man who lived on Olympus, even while he plied his brush at Meung. His art was saturated in scholarship.

The water-color is, in a measure, symbolical of his whole temper. Musing over his romantic theme, I have found myself recalling, irresistibly, a poet who fastened primarily upon its romance, Aubrey De Vere:

When from his white chest first he pushed the shining deep that stayed him,
Fair-tressed Europa thought the Bull too gentle to upbraid him;
Her laughing face thrown back to those who spread their hands to chide him,
She sang: "We all his trappings wrought; yet I alone dare ride him!"

. . . . . .

Men say that Venus winked on high, a deeper nectar quaffing—

That Phœbus, westward drifting, sang, prophetic
sang though laughing;
"Fair maid! more numerous than the tears adown
that pale-face flowing,
One day shall gleam the crowns of kings to thee their
sceptres owing!"

Ingres couldn't for the life of him have conceived his subject in that free, exhilarating vein. For he took it as he found it—not in his imagination, but on a Greek vase, and the episode is, as I say, symbolical, because the immobility here imposed upon him really extended itself into designs of his own invention. It is an odd paradox. He could make line flow in superb liberty, but naturalistic movement is hardly the note of his compositions. It is not to be particularly regretted since, as this water-color shows, even when in the chains of another's pattern he could achieve beauty. The magic in the master's touch may have been a little dimmed, but his genius continued to prevail.

The date of the drawing is significant. It belongs to the period of "L'Age d'Or," the great decoration at Dampierre, the last period in which, as Lapauze felicitously has it, Ingres *vivait dans une auréole de gloire,* when he *assistait à son apothéose.* What he did he did utterly to please himself. The exigencies of portrait painting, tacit or explicit, had ceased to trouble him. He worked on repetitions of his beloved "Vierge a l'Hostie," and finished the marvellous

crayon of "Homer Déifié" which had preoccupied him for a quarter of a century. The "Europa" points to a moment in his life when he was as full of honors as of years, a master utterly at peace.

Its external history is amusing to retrace. There is only one water-color mentioned in the list of paintings, drawings, and studies which he sold to Haro for 50,000 francs in the "liquidation" of his atelier, which he had the foresight to arrange in the October preceding his death. That is an *aquarelle d'après une coupe,* but the last word was probably inadvertently used, and we may well recognize in the "Europa" the drawing that went to Haro. Delaborde, whose book was published in 1870, lists the thing as belonging to "M. Baltard, Membre de l'Institut." This must have been Victor Baltard, the architect, a Prix de Rome man, who was with him at the Villa Medici. His signature appears on the address which artists and pupils of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts sent to Ingres with a medal when he was nominated as Senator in 1862. Baltard it was who designed the stele which stands with Bonnassieux's bust over the master's grave at Père-Lachaise. There is some sentiment, therefore, allied with the "Europa." It was cherished by one who had known Ingres and loved him. From every point of view it is a precious relic, a truly personal record of his style and of his predominant habit of mind.

Apropos of the "Europa," I may venture some

comment upon a collection of nearly fifty drawings by Ingres brought to America by M. De Hauke. These souvenirs were published by M. Boyer D'Agen, the *Ingriste* who is gratefully remembered for his volume of the artist's correspondence, issued in 1909, and in his preface he traversed their provenance. They date back to 1820–24, when Ingres was at Florence laboring heroically upon that famous "Vow of Louis XIII" which he had been commissioned to paint for the cathedral at Montauban. It is a Raphaelesque composition, a work in the grand style, possessing the serenity essential to its integrity. It proceeded out of a bitter period in the painter's life, when he was harassed by poverty and driven to all kinds of makeshifts. What kept him going? What helped to preserve the equilibrium of his art in discouraging circumstances? For one thing, the communion with the antique past which the drawings to which I allude commemorate. That is, indeed, the point about them that is most significant.

I have seen kindred notes in the vast collection of drawings at Montauban but the group under discussion is unique. How it failed to be lodged long ago at Montauban is a little puzzling. Ingres made Armand Cambon his executor. That individual was surely the most devoted administrator of his wishes. But on his death in 1885 the album containing the drawings remained among his belongings and was unheard of until a public sale of Cambon's effects

was held in 1904. Until then the little treasure had still to be really discovered. M. Pierre Gary routed it out from a mass of seemingly negligible papers. Through some accident of forgetfulness, in all probability, the old painter friend of Ingres had neglected to add it to the tremendous mass of evidence at Montauban. We wish that it might have had the benefit of some commentary from his hand, some notes on the actual making of these interesting sketches. As it is they tell, unaided, an apt story of the master's mood.

It is peculiarly as such that they are to be considered. They are very different in character from what one ordinarily understands by "an Ingres drawing." The touch is much more deliberate, the line is thinner than you will find in the familiar portraits. In fact, the style seems much nearer to that of a period ten years earlier than the stay in Florence. It is Ingres the student rather than Ingres the master that is represented. Yet he was, in a sense, a master from the beginning. He could not draw at all without giving his line a certain distinction. Though it is in these sketches, as I have said, a trifle thin, it is never hard or wiry. And for its careful, pondered quality there was doubtless a reason implicit in the matter in hand.

Ingres was not drawing from nature and letting himself go. He was defining the forms of sculptures, dealing with marble contours and with the niceties of carven drapery. Inevitably he kept his eye

on the object and set down the fact. No master of plastic art could have more sympathetically made these notes from the antique. He was not being creative. He was making records. With that reverential attitude so characteristic of him in all his artistic relations, he was content to be not so much the draughtsman as the interpreter. He is that with extraordinary felicity. These drawings are far more eloquent of antique beauty than any photograph would be. We observe particularly how eloquent he is in respect to movement and gesture. Above all he recaptures something of the largeness, the dignity, the monumental quality, which belong to the Greek hypothesis. As M. Boyer D'Agen points out, you may sense in these drawings the inspiration from the past which fostered the development of the painter's own genius. It is important to recognize in them what I can only describe as the imponderables. The difference between them and the typical Ingres portrait is only a detail of craftsmanship. In their fidelity to the classical spirit they are at one with everything that he did.

The classical spirit dominated but did not enslave him. He was always returning to antiquity but he was always returning to Nature, too, and the worst mistake to make about him is to range him thoughtlessly as a dry "Academic" type, using formulas and drawing by rule of thumb. No artist ever surpassed him in devoted research into truth. Only in this mat-

ter of truth he was selective, after the habit of a master having ideals of beauty. His ideals are not reducible to a phrase. As I have remarked before, he was not a man of formulas, and I cannot discover that his thoughts about things beautiful ever crystallized themselves into a programme. A clew to his attitude may be gathered, however, from an anecdote which lies somewhere in Lapauze or Amaury-Duval. It describes Ingres walking in a Roman street with his wife. They were approached by one of those deformed mendicants characteristic of Italy, whereupon Madame Ingres hid the repellent vision from her husband's eyes by shielding them with her shawl. He could not bear an abnormal spectacle. His soul was saturated in the purity, the refinement, the exquisiteness which we think of when we think of Raphael. His dream was to reach a pitch of attainment which would fit him to clasp the feet of Raphael. All this too, I repeat, with a sort of Poussinesque breadth and nobility. Some of his sayings to his students beautifully disclose his point of view:

In the construction of a figure do not proceed bit by bit, but build it up at a stroke; get the ensemble.

Draw purely, but with largeness. Purity and largeness, *voilà le dessin, voilà l'art.*

In the images of man in art, repose is the first beauty of the body, just as in life wisdom is the highest expression of the soul.

It is my effort to copy my model as a very humble servant and not to idealize it.

I have to chuckle over that last pronouncement. The blesséd, invincible Olympian! He couldn't have helped making his model beautiful if he had tried. For one thing he was exacting as to his models. Go down among the thousands of drawings at Montauban, and you will be struck by the fact that there was no room in his cosmos for any of those monstrous types that used to pique the curiosity of Leonardo. If you are to judge from his works, the world was peopled for Ingres with men and women very good to look upon.

In his depiction of them he was primarily the draughtsman rather than the colorist, though on this point it is well to be on one's guard against the severer critics. He could get on occasion extraordinary felicity in an arrangement of color. I recall his "Madame Devaucay" as one of the most brilliant studies in black-and-yellow I ever saw, and as charming a color-scheme appears in the "Chevalier X" in the collection of the late Mrs. Havemeyer. It is a harmony in two notes of brown, notes limpid and delectable. The truth is that Ingres would have a higher reputation as a colorist if he had settled upon a richer *facture* for his canvases, if as regards pure painted surface he had allied himself more with such types as Velasquez and Vermeer. That, I suppose, is what troubled George Moore when he made the remark about "quality" which I have quoted. For a critic nurtured on the flashing stroke of Manet there

is naturally not much sensuous stimulus in the rather flat tints of Ingres, suggestive as they are more of a Florentine Primitive working in tempera than a modern working in oils. Where the quality of Ingres comes out is in his drawing, whether he be using the brush or the pencil. There is something of the magic of Holbein in his painted portraits, something of Holbein in the right placing of the figure, in the unity of the composition, and then, transcendently, in the linear definition of the form. Line, pure line, is a surpassingly glorious instrument of expression, and the enchanting thing about it is that on its fundamental strength the great artist develops the most intensely individual denotement of his genius. Consider the linear idioms of Leonardo and Michael Angelo, of Dürer and Rembrandt, of Degas and Forain. Ingres is of that splendid and powerful company. He uses line with equal force and delicacy. His line is as firm as steel but it is never hard or wiry. On the contrary, it is as supple, as suave, as any line in the history of art. I never smile more ironically over the linking of the names of Ingres and Matisse than when I think of the line of Ingres.

Little by little it has been receiving its recognition in the United States. I have mentioned Whistler's copy as the first Ingres souvenir I ever knew in this country. In 1895 Durand-Ruel had here a small picture of "Cardinal Bibbiena Introducing La Fornarina to Raphael." I think, though I am not absolutely

THE CHEVALIER X.

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY INGRES IN THE HAVEMEYER COLLECTION

sure, that this passed into the Yerkes Collection, but when that was dispersed it went back to Europe. Once on a visit to the late J. G. Johnson in Philadelphia, having looked at pictures of every imaginable school, I spoke of the extraordinary variety of his collection, but laughingly defied him to show me an Ingres. Whereupon he promptly showed me two —a little "Saint Symphorien," a replica of the big picture in the Cathedral at Autun, and the portrait of the Academician Dupaty, which is one of the painter's masterpieces. The Metropolitan Museum acquired a fine pair of portraits by Ingres in 1918, the portraits of M. Leblanc and his wife, and it has a couple of good drawings, one of them a portrait and the other a sheaf of studies from the nude. Mr. Grenville Winthrop, in his remarkable collection of drawings, has an imposing group of some of the most brilliant in the *œuvre* of Ingres. The late John Quinn left in his collection a notable Ingres, the "Raphael and La Fornarina," one of several versions that he painted of the subject. It was the late Mrs. Havemeyer who brought to this country the "Chevalier X," the harmony in brown to which I have earlier referred. There are other momentous works by Ingres in America and more will be forthcoming from Europe in the near future, for the master's fame is only increasing and sooner or later American collectors will eagerly compete for his works. When the "Chevalier X" was on its way to New

York from Corsica, where it had been preserved in the family since the time of the sitter, it paused in Paris, where it was seen by the critic, Roger Marx. "It is a national calamity," he said, "that that picture should leave France." No doubt, and it is a national aggrandizement when such a work of art comes to our shores.

I had that conviction when in the spring of 1927 it developed that the "Madame d'Haussonville" had passed into the Frick Museum, to become in perpetuity the property of the public. I never heard more thrilling news in the domain of the galleries. It meant that through the wisdom of the Frick trustees America assumed the custody of one of the greatest monuments in the history of Ingres, perhaps the greatest monument of all in the category of his feminine portraits. It dates from the forties, when Ingres was in the very heyday of his genius. Some of his noblest triumphs were behind him, it is true. He had painted the "Bertin," for example, fully ten years before. But Ingres was the type of artist to whom the years bring wisdom, and in the "Madame d'Haussonville" he sums up, as it were, the priceless experience of a lifetime. It was in 1842, while he was still at work upon the famous portrait of Cherubini, that he made his first study, now in the Bonnat collection, from the lady whom he came to call *notre belle petite sauvage vicomtesse*. She was the young Louise de Broglie, who was married in 1836 to the

Vicomte Othenin d'Haussonville, variously diplomat, politician, and historian, who died a member of the French Academy in 1884. The portrait was long in the making. In the study in the Bonnat collection the sitter faces in one direction, and in the next sketch in another. Then studies were resumed, and in two of them, now at Montauban, the pose is the one finally adopted. That was settled in 1845, the year of the painting's completion. It crops out in the artist's correspondence as a source of grave anxiety to him, but, as Lapauze says, that was the way with all his works. When he stood before nature he despaired of seizing the truth which he wished to throw upon canvas. There was not a portrait of his which did not thus cause him anguish. Nevertheless, he had the satisfaction of hearing encomiums pronounced by the sitter's family. When M. Thiers came to see the portrait he remarked that Ingres must have fallen in love to have painted it so well. It is an apt saying, for, indeed, Ingres was never more felicitous, more sensitive, more charming, than when he painted Madame d'Haussonville. In color the portrait is a good deal less than a miracle. Ingres was never a great colorist. But in draughtsmanship he was supreme, he was brilliant in composition, he had the power of evoking a sitter's personality, and he knew, above all, how to bestow upon a painting the accent of the grand style. Just as a study of form and drapery alone, this portrait is one of the

triumphs of nineteenth-century art, and one of the most beautiful. It belongs, I suppose, to what is nominally called the academic world, but the genius of Ingres really transcends that world and lifts the "Madame d'Haussonville" into the category of truly great art. It has the inevitability only to be associated with a creative master.

The "Madame d'Haussonville" brings us to a kind of climax yet there are one or two more productions for me to add to my rough census of works by Ingres in the United States. I have in mind, for example, a great "Portrait of a Man" which appeared at the Ehrich Gallery in New York. It belonged, obviously, to the painter's Italian period, to that of the memorable "Granet" at Aix. The seated figure emerges from a gray surtout, the capes of which make an effective note. The legs in their tight-fitting yellowish breeches are crossed as in the "Rivière" of the Louvre and the "Dupaty" of the Johnson collection. The gloved right hand is obscured, but the left is in full view, a wonderfully expressive member. The beautifully modelled head rises above a dark coat and luxuriant white cravat. There is a velvet lining to the overcoat and the pearly color in it makes a telling patch of tone. Tone, indeed, is very important in this portrait. The lighter notes are especially impressive, the whole area they fill possessing a limpidity recalling Velasquez. I admire in this work the simple but animated design and the supreme

drawing, but almost more enkindling than either is the breadth with which the whole thing is painted. Ingres so often impresses you as working with the point. But here he is working unmistakably with the brush and gives his subject a curiously free and supple envelopment. His wonted austerity is somehow lightened and tempered. The portrait is instinct with life. It is one of the most humanly sympathetic performances of his that we know.

It is a very beautiful work of art. How true Ingres was to that prevailing motive of his! When Granger, a former pupil of his, looked at the "Œdipus" and recognized the model he said that the figure seemed to him an idealized portrait. Ingres was furious. "You may think what you like," he exclaimed, "but it is my effort to copy my model as a very humble servant and not to idealize it." They were playing with words. Granger drove at the root of the matter. Ingres copied his model, but in the process poured into his work the indefinable magic of his temperament, his art. He gave us more than a model. He gave us the model invested with an incomparable beauty.

Miss Helene Guerber, of New Jersey, lent to the Metropolitan Museum for a time three characteristic drawings. Two are portraits of Monsieur and Madame Gonin, Swiss friends of the artist whom he came to know at Florence in the early forties. The third is of their son-in-law, Auguste Guerber. The

best is the one of M. Gonin, a beautiful thing, masterly in the definition of the features and equally skilful in the terse indications of form beneath them. Miss Louise Guerber, in the "Bulletin," gives some charming family recollections of the intimacy between Ingres and her ancestors, from which I take the following:

Ingres was a favorite and frequent guest. When he came for the long visits he would install himself in some of the numerous rooms of the Palazzo, set up housekeeping, and live independently of the family Gonin. When he had money he always insisted upon carrying it all with him "to hear it clink." Sometimes the jingle in his pockets tempted him to buy a rare curiosity to be had cheap and he would spend all his money to obtain it. On returning home, proudly exhibiting it to his wife and receiving from her an anxious inquiry about what they would eat, he would propose to play such lovely music on his violin that they would forget their hunger. As M. Gonin knew of this he instructed his daughter Louise, whose schoolroom was directly beneath the rooms Ingres occupied, to report to him whenever she heard music there at meal time. He would then send a lackey upstairs to invite M. and Madame Ingres to the next meal, an invitation which they always joyfully accepted! In the traditional manner of artists Ingres seems to have been properly absent-minded, for one day he appeared clad only in his nightshirt but carrying a hat and umbrella, and so quite ready to go out.

Finally, by a piquant coincidence, there is in the Charles P. Taft collection, at Cincinnati, a portrait which falls into close relation with Miss Guerber's drawings. It is a painting of "Mademoiselle Gonin," either the Louise Gonin who became Madame Guerber or her younger sister, Jeanne. It is a noble work, the head superbly painted and the hands revealing, as the hands in an Ingres so often do, a touch worthy of Holbein. Some day there will be an exhibition dedicated to him in the United States. If everything by him that is owned here, paintings and drawings, is included in it, it will prove of exciting character.

XIV

MANET

XIV

MANET

MANET has been fortunate in his biographers. Theodore Duret was not only his friend but a critic who from all his associations was exactly fitted to be his interpreter. Antonin Proust had known and loved him from their youth up. The late Etienne Moreau-Nelaton, whose two sumptuous volumes were published as recently as 1926, was a peculiarly skilful *archiviste,* and to his rich mass of information he added an extraordinary series of illustrations. In short, the artist who was most cavalierly rejected by his contemporaries has been drawn with singular sympathy for the judgment of posterity. Already, since his death in 1883, there has developed, indeed, something like general agreement upon the question of his art. It is an art to which it is always interesting to return, but particularly at a time like the present, when the craft of painting is blown upon by such strange winds. He recalls to us the profound truth that the truly constructive revolutionary has in him invariably, at bottom, the elements of a stabilizing force.

There is a saying of Fantin-Latour's that is apposite. Referring to the inclusion of his friend in his "Hommage à Delacroix," he said that he had put Manet there "with his true Gallic head." He was

an intensely French type, an intensely characteristic embodiment of the French genius. He exemplified revolutionary ideas, but they were rationalized. Born in Paris, on the Bohemian side of the Seine, he early manifested the traits one expects on the Rive Gauche, yet he was steadied even then by inherited impulses of a more conservative nature. In so far as the phrase connotes poise and a sense of measure, he was decidedly a man of breeding. The dignity of the magistrate who was his father persisted in his blood. It made him, as a painter, play the game. He was invincibly faithful to the principle that the artist, to excel, must know his craft.

He was born in the Rue des Petits-Augustins, later the Rue Bonaparte, on January 23, 1832. The elder Manet, a judge of the Tribunal of the Seine, seems to have had a private fortune, and to have been altogether so placed in the world as to have expected a certain sobriety in his son's career, quite as a matter of course. When the boy turned instead to art there were the usual family collisions. For a time these led to compromise. Since he could not enter a studio, he would at least avoid the law. Manet's first venture away from the parental roof was in a maritime direction. He went on a voyage to Brazil, as an apprentice in a merchant ship. The experience did not divert him in the slightest from his purpose to be an artist, and on his return the family surrendered. He entered forthwith the studio

of Couture. There he was, to tell the truth, no more docile than he had been at home. Young and inexperienced as he was, he nevertheless felt irresistibly moved to substitute something like realism for the academic habit of his master. The latter made an odd comment which is repeated in all the memoirs, and may aptly be repeated here: *Mon pauvre garçon, vous ne serez jamais que le Daumier de votre temps.* Obviously Couture had no idea of the ultimate growth of the caricaturist's legend. When he warned Manet against becoming the Daumier of his time, he thought he was doing him a kindness! For his part Manet thought it was better to be the Daumier of a period than the Coypel of it. He stayed with Couture for some time, but in the long run broke with him and embarked upon his own way.

It is at this point that he seems to me most the man of his race, most emphatically the Frenchman. He is original, independent, but he has the French predisposition toward the past, toward tradition. The "advanced" artist of to-day so often seems to think that he can gain nothing by contact with his historic predecessors. It has been different with the French leaders and renovators. The romantic Delacroix is a man of culture. His rival, Ingres, is a disciple of Raphael. A realist like Degas sits at the feet of the Renaissance masters, and his friend Forain in his youth studies Chardin. Manet was like that. Proust tells us something of his friend's

travels. They led him to Rubens at Antwerp, to Rembrandt at Amsterdam, to the Flemish Primitives at Brussels, to Hals at Haarlem, to Albrecht Dürer at Dresden, to Holbein at Bâle. Amongst the Italians he was attracted by Titian and Tintoretto. In Spain, in due course, he was to extend the knowledge of Velasquez for which he had laid the foundations in the Louvre, and to decide that he was "the painter of painters." Repeatedly in the annals of his earlier years you come upon his penchant for this or that old master. He copied more than one of them in the Louvre, and especially Tintoretto's portrait of himself, which he considered to be one of the finest in the world. Occasionally his indebtedness to the past was practical, specific. The group in the "Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" was filtered down to him from Raphael through one of Marc Antonio's engravings, and Paul Jamot, writing in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* on the sources of Manet's inspiration, has found the basis for "La Pêche," a landscape with figures, in a canvas by Annibale Carraci in the Louvre, bearing the same title and containing elements of design by which the modern man has clearly profited. Yet one may take account of all these things and still leave Manet's central originality untouched. With him as with the other Frenchmen I have cited, and many more, tradition was a fertilizing influence, not a matter of styles and motives to be imitated.

His essential independence was not at once recog-

nized. "Le Christ aux Anges," in the Salon of 1864, for example, led Thoré to talk about him as the maker of a *pastiche* of Velasquez and Goya, to say nothing of other types. The discoverer of Vermeer was on that occasion a little less penetrating than usual. Manet's friend Baudelaire came to the rescue with a letter to Thoré emphatically setting that gentleman down. Incidentally he said something about himself which is delightfully indicative of the point of view to adopt regarding Manet. "They accuse me," he said, "of imitating Poe. Do you know why I have so patiently studied Poe? Because he resembles me. The first time I opened a book of his, I saw, with mingled astonishment and rapture, not only subjects which I had dreamed, but phrases which I had thought—written by him twenty years before." Manet had that experience in the world of Velasquez. He entered it as a world of his own. He and the Spaniard had a spiritual affinity. It was natural and instinctive with him to paint in a manner akin to the manner of Velasquez. Working out his artistic destiny in his own way, beating out a style of his own, he made himself the fellow of the master. Those Spanish subjects which are so familiar in his *œuvre* were not, at the beginning, drawn direct from Spain. He found them in a company of Spanish dancers and singers that had come to Paris. In recreating there what I might call the Velasquez cult, he was exercising, really, an original, organic

force. That is what enabled him to energize a movement. That is why he survives.

The temptation is strong to turn at once to consideration of his craftsmanship, but as a matter of fact it is important to consider also his outlook upon the stuff of art. A large part of his value as a contributor to the progressive tendency in French art lies in his attitude toward life. Couture was a craftsman, and one for whom Manet was bound to have respect. It was his substance rather than his form that led the pupil to revolt. What did the ancient Romans mean to Manet? For him, rather, the men and women in the Paris of his day. It is interesting to look through the pictorial evidence so voluminously assembled by M. Moreau-Nelaton and to see how absolutely devoid it is of anything like formal picture-making. Manet loved an arresting subject. When Maximilian was executed he pounced on that. It has been a legend that he painted the combat between the *Kearsarge* and the *Alabama* as it went on off the shore at Cherbourg. The legend has been exploded. The truth is that he saw the *Kearsarge* off Boulogne, later. But his battle-piece (now in the John G. Johnson collection, in Philadelphia) is rendered, by a powerful stroke of the imagination, one of the vividest actualities ever painted. Actuality was as the very breath of his nostrils. He painted the thing that he could see, and in the great mass of work that he produced a tingling realism prevails. There can be no

doubt at all that a passion for the truth was inseparable from his genius, that it helped to form his style, and reacted, too, upon his technique. It stood in the way of the popular and official recognition that he curiously craved.

I say "curiously" because it is surely odd that an artist of his individuality, his scorn for compromise, his splendid courage, should have cared a straw about recompenses and decorations. He ought, one would say, to have taken a leaf from the sardonically humorous book of Degas. But there something of his ancestry crops out, something of the blood of the old magistrate his father, with his fine sense of worldly place and decorum. Manet simply could not bear to be rejected of his time, to be held up to obloquy while he watched lesser folk accumulate medals and the like. When some tactless jury awarded Whistler a second-class medal, he declined it with his second-class thanks. Manet, I fancy, would have accepted it. Meanwhile he yielded not an inch of his isolated position. The authorities might neglect him, but he went on painting according to his own hypothesis. Why did it meet with such small favor? The public had not been educated to the point at which it could appreciate his innovations. All the time it differed from the modernistic vagaries that are nowadays foolishly presented as analogous, differed from them in that it was fundamentally sound, framed with respect to

the rectitude of a craft. It did not occur to Manet to throw overboard the immemorial laws of painting. He laid one color boldly beside another, refusing to mess about in the old modulations of tone, but he kept his color pure, respecting its integrity as a medium. Also—and here he was faithful enough to the admonition of Couture—he insisted upon drawing like a gentleman.

Duret notes that "as a rule Manet's drawings were not carried beyond the state of a rough draft or sketch; they were made in order to seize a passing impression, a gesture, some salient feature or detail." He could not draw as Ingres drew, or Degas. But strong, steady, supple draughtsmanship runs through all his painting, the draughtsmanship of the brush that is governed by knowledge. It is, among other things, the draughtsmanship that has its origin in a true sense of form. You feel this not only in his drawings from life but in any black and white in which he records the outlines of some famous painting, a Velasquez or a Fra Angelico. At once it is evident that the figure is realized from within, so to say. His drawing is magnificently vitalized. This was largely because, as I have said, he consulted life. Hand and eye were interdependent in a campaign amongst living things. And behind both was an inquisitive, superlatively active brain. Manet painted still life over and over again, but he never made the mistake of painting the human figure as so much still

life. He was, indeed, the Daumier of his time, if that meant sympathy for the great human spectacle. I have often wondered why so few of the many moderns who have profited by his technical example have thought also of emulating his range. He found actuality in every conceivable direction. He painted religious subjects and he painted landscapes. He turned from the bull-ring to Parisian portraiture. He triumphed in the nude, as witness the "Olympia" in the Louvre, and then he would produce a picture like "Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère," sent to the Salon only the year before his death. By good luck the great exhibition at the Ecole in 1884 was photographed wall by wall, and it is fascinating to observe his scope as it is thus illustrated. In one group "Le Bon Bock" is flanked by "Le Bal de l'Opéra" and "Les Courses à Longchamp." In another the delicate grace of the "Eva Gonzales" is contrasted with the almost brutal vigor of the "Emile Zola." Beneath the naval battle I have cited hangs "L'Homme Mort." The "Olympia" has a still life for a neighbor, above that is placed "Les Bulles de Savon," and next them both is "L'Espada." There was variety in his cosmos, an enkindling variety, and every note in this diversified symphony rings true.

What did it all make for, in a broad conception of the subject? For the beauty that lies in fidelity to life and that belongs, even more, to workmanship, to style, to that ineffable accent which a great artist

places upon things nominally prosaic. There are moments in which Manet has something like charm. I remember a masterpiece of his, a painting of a woman before a mirror, facing away from the beholder. Her back is a little miracle in modelling and color, so much shimmering surface of silvery, pearly tone, below which a passage of heavenly blue fairly ravishes the eye. Charm? The painting vibrates with it. He had a great gift for the interpretation of feminine lightness and loveliness. He could draw a woman's profile with a touch positively caressing in its delicacy. On the whole, however, his taste was robust rather than exquisite. It has often amused me to reflect on his "Olympia" together with the Rokeby "Venus" of Velasquez. The former is a superb technical *tour de force,* but as a picture it is a little repellent. The Spanish canvas is one of the suavest nudes in the world, one of the subtlest and most refined. You recognize a kindred distinction when you turn from the "Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" to that painting by Giorgione in the Louvre, which is, in a way, its ancestor. The Italian painter is unmistakably a poet. Manet is just as clearly a narrator in prose. One can understand the revulsion of that old public, even though one does not sympathize with it. He had strength, yes, but not precisely the tenderness which is not always foreign to it. It was not for nothing that he remained the child of Paris, untinctured in his temperament by the qualities which mark

the dreamer as a creature apart from the observer. How could he have poetized anything? And, for that matter, why should he have done so?

With that observant faculty of his he got enough out of nature, in all conscience, to dispense with any attempt to put something into it from his imagination. There comes back to me the memory of "La Maison à Rueil," in which he portrayed the home of Labiche, the playwright, which he leased in the summer of 1882, almost on the eve of his death. The house and garden, with a tree dividing the composition, were painted with an indescribable sensitiveness. The old haunter of the boulevards, the denizen of the Café Guerbois and of Tortoni's, turned into something like the maker of an idyll. It brings me back to that question of his range, to the eager, adventurous soul of him which is one of the pleasantest things to remember about Manet.

At long last he came into his own, into that harbor of official recognition for which he had such an odd longing. The Government decorated him, and with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole he could feel at peace with the world. He was Hors Concours in the Salon of 1882. In the spring of 1883 he was dead. But long before that he had been recognized by enlightened opinion in France. His comrades were men like Monet, Bracquemond, Degas, and so on, and their high regard for him was little by little shared by a wider circle. The

younger generation turned to him as to a leader, and his principles have ever since played a dominant part in modern painting. His influence goes on and will long continue, for, as I have endeavored to show, he stands for what is eternal in French art, honest workmanship. In his direct, clean-cut stroke, as in his truth, he is at one not only with his own time but with the genius of Poussin.

XV

RENOIR

XV

RENOIR

In one of those allusions to the art of the past which made Renoir's conversation singularly self-revealing, he once uttered this saying: "There is another thing in Velasquez which delights me: his painting radiates with the joy the artist had in doing it." The words gave a clew to his whole philosophy. There is nothing in Vollard's anecdotic book about him that is more characteristic than the not infrequent expressions of his unquenchable gusto. Looking back at his twenties he loves to recall a favorite restaurant "where life was a perpetual holiday," and he adds with artless feeling: "The world knew how to laugh in those days!" Rembrandt was one of his heroes, but, as is easily to be understood in one of his temperament, he sometimes found the Dutchman a little "stuffy," and from the frank declaration of that idea he goes on to say: "For my part, I have a predilection for painting that lends joyousness to a wall." Life and art were fused for him into one happy activity. His comrades were as intense in their devotion to painting as he was. Manet was quite as ardent, in his way. But it was a different way; as poignant, no doubt, but less lyrical. I don't suppose a painter ever lived who concentrated upon his art

with a finer singleness of purpose than Degas, yet he seems to me to have been motivated by the passionless fervor of the scientist where Renoir was kept going by the impulse of the poet.

He has the delicate sensuousness of the poet, an almost romantic feeling for the emotions evoked by the visible world, though there was, strictly speaking, nothing of the convinced "romanticist" in his nature. He rejoiced in a gracious form, in a woman whose skin would "take the light," and the loveliness of flowers uplifted his soul. He had marvellous energy through a long life, even in the later years when physical disability greatly handicapped him, but this inspiriting, endearing energy of his spent itself upon light, pleasant themes and in peculiarly spontaneous moods. The grand style was not for him. He left the affirmations of mere force to others. "As far as I am concerned," he said with a friendly dig at Degas for his praise of Legros, "I had rather have a penny plate done in three pretty colors than miles of your 'powerful'—and tedious—painting." There is something delectable in one of his reflections on technical magic. "It is not enough," he says, "for a painter to be a clever craftsman; he must love to 'caress' his canvas, too. That's what was lacking in Van Gogh. . . . His canvases do not show the light, tender touch of the brush." It is the tenderness of his touch that has contributed almost more than anything else to Renoir's fame.

Born at Limoges, in 1841, he grew up in the old tradition of porcelain painting. There is nothing pathetic, there is nothing to be regretted, in the circumstance that he was an apprentice to the craft in his 'teens, working at what seem to have been something like starvation wages. As a matter of fact the experience must have been helpful to eye and hand. It is more disconcerting to know that only a few years later he was in the atelier of Gleyre. Study under that disciple of Ingres must have been for him, as it was for Whistler, a discipline of mixed value. But long afterward, when he talked about it with Vollard, Renoir described Gleyre as "a very estimable painter," and admitted that he had the merit of leaving his pupils "pretty much to their own devices." Renoir's other contacts, with types, for example, as dissimilar as Diaz and Courbet, were probably of service to him, but only in obscure ways; it was not clearly perceptible that any of them left a mark upon him. He had stimulating friendships rather than formative alliances and even in his earlier period he was emphatically his own man. To what save an authentic individuality are we to attribute pictures such as "La Loge," or the "Danseuse," painted in 1874, when he was still in his thirties? The "Danseuse"—now in Mr. Widener's collection—revives that contrast between Renoir and Degas at which I have already glanced. Degas painted just such a figure as that little *ballerina* over and over again and always

made her interesting. But from under Renoir's brush she somehow emerges a blither, sweeter image than the other would ever have made her. In Degas she would belong to the stage, utterly. In Renoir she belongs to youth. Where Degas is coolly mordant Renoir is curiously, and, again, tenderly, sympathetic.

The world as he saw it was a most friendly, engaging spectacle. What a perfect exhalation of young, happy student life is the "Sortie du conservatoire"! I dare say Renoir, like any other painter wholly enamoured of the art of painting and accordingly disdainful of all "literary associations," would have disclaimed with laughter the idea of his ever having "told a story" in one of his pictures. He tells a story, nevertheless, in this one, tells it in the sense of saturating the design in "human interest," embodying unmistakable traits in the personalities he portrays. Look, too, at "Les Canotiers," in Mr. Lewisohn's collection. It is in my opinion a veritable pæan on the joy of living, rapturous in its bright, exhilarating notation of light and air and color, all dedicated to the sheer pleasure of existence. The influence of such paintings, I may note in passing, is sorely needed in our own time, when many artists are given over to rather dismal subjects and to an all-pervading drabness, very near to mere ugliness. Renoir asserts the claims of happiness and beauty. He is very much "on the side of the angels." He is not afraid to give pleasure to the beholder. Inci-

dentally he maintains the immemorial standard of the artist who respects his craft. "Only the painter who knows his business thoroughly," he says, apropos of Velasquez, "can create the impression that a picture was done at one stroke." Some of his remarks to Vollard in this field are so pertinent to-day that I must quote them at greater length. Observing that no progress has been made in painting, in respect either to ideas or technique, he asks what the artist is to do, and then proceeds to answer his own question, in part, as follows:

He should strengthen and perfect his métier, untiringly, but he can only do that with the help of tradition. To-day everybody has genius, that goes without saying; but one thing is certain: nobody knows how to draw a hand any more, and none of us know our craft. The ancients were able to produce that marvellous surface quality and those limpid colors, the secret of which we are still vainly hunting for, because they had a thorough knowledge of their craft. I am very much afraid that modern theories will not discover it for us.

But, although craftsmanship is the foundation of art, it is not everything. There is another aspect of the art of the ancients which makes it beautiful; it is that serenity one never wearies of, that makes us feel their work is eternal. Serenity was within themselves; it came not only from the nature of their simple and tranquil lives, but from their religious faith. . . . The painters of those enviable days had their faults, of course . . . happily for them. But when you see

how the freshness of their work has endured down the centuries, you are blind to anything but their qualities. I love to caress those beautiful marbles, and to touch the marvellous impasto of their paintings; I cannot express the joy it gives me.

The impression you get from these words, an impression of sincerity and truth, and of an enkindling enthusiasm, you get from Renoir's works. He had, I fear, in his closing years, some "modern theories" of his own. When I ventured to point out to a friend who knew him well that the "hot" tints of his later nudes were unnatural and unlovely, I was told that the artist had deliberately adopted that key, counting on time to bring it into relation with beauty. It is a dubious speculation. The figure subjects of the period to which I refer have always struck me as intrinsically unsuccessful—and a little mannered into the bargain. No, I do not believe that in his "last phase" he always struck twelve. But he did so magnificently in the major years of his career. He did so in part because he had the faithful ideal of craftsmanship indicated just now, in part because he was instinctively a puissant colorist, but above all things, I think, because he had that passion of his for life and beauty. The terms were literally interchangeable for him. Seeing his subjects directly and vitally he saw them beautifully. I marvel at the transformation achieved in a picture of his like "La Loge." The man and woman in it repeat a theatrical group that life has

yielded to an infinite number of painters, to so many of them, in fact, that the subject ought, humanly speaking, to rest forever enveloped in banality. Then there is the matter of costume, to "date" the thing. Only Renoir's alchemy leaves the picture dateless. The figures have a pulsating life in them, the composition is as felicitous as it is simple, naturalistic, and the web of light and color has great charm. In the upshot a trivial motive takes on a certain weight and the painting develops into one of the truly durable things in French art.

I remember seeing it some years ago at the Durand-Ruel Gallery, along with some other famous Renoirs—the "Danseuse" aforementioned, "Au Concert," "La Femme au Chat," "Sur la Terrasse," and, particularly, the great picture of "Le Dejeuner des Canotiers," which has since entered the Phillips Memorial Gallery at Washington. What comes back to me from the dazzling demonstration of Renoir's genius—which seemed to gather up for me the experiences of a lifetime in the observation of his works —is a sense of what I then felt to be a kind of Giorgionesque richness and splendor. Indeed, Renoir is to my mind a Venetian of the Renaissance, born out of his time—zestful, voluptuous, intoxicated with form and color, vibrating with a half-poetic and half-animalesque emotion, the whole fabric steadied by adherence to the laws of craftsmanship and by an invincibly refined taste. This joyous pagan, for that

is what he is in his frank, sensuous vision of the world, moved with a strangely even gait toward an elevated type of beauty. Rubens, no doubt, was a greater master, a bigger, more creative figure. But Rubens seems coarse beside Renoir. The latter's nudes are as far removed from the gross reality of the Fleming as they are from the waxy unreality of Bouguereau. Renoir's figures are alive, glowing, tangible, and they are something more than that, they are beautiful. His art is tinctured by that quality which he loved in the ancients; it has serenity. He, too, has his "marvellous impasto." I revert to that touch of his, so caressing and so sure. It is the touch of the pure painter, who feels, subtly, indescribably, the very genius of his medium.

If he has the touch of the pure painter it is none the less potent because it was nourished on many springs of temperament, because it expressed not only the technician but the man. It is a specious hypothesis that would isolate the resources of an artist in so many water-tight compartments. His work is the manifestation of his whole being and I know of no historic figure in art whose productions are more comprehensively personal than Renoir's. For this polished craftsman the evolution of a design depended equally upon his impulse, upon his enthusiasm, upon what we can only call a painter's inspiration. It was transcendently important for him that he had not only eyes and a hand but a mind and a heart.

The truth is that Renoir's mind supplies some of the most illuminating passages in his biography. He had a splendid liberalism, not the regimented liberalism of the doctrinaire but that of the man who really thinks and feels for himself and has, into the bargain, a generous soul. If it is inspiriting to be made aware of his response to Titian, or Velasquez, or Watteau, or Delacroix, it is possibly more exciting to find him appreciative of Ingres. He is profoundly moved by one of the portraits: "Ingres's masterpiece is 'Madame de Senonnes'; the color is superb . . . It is painted like a Titian. You must go to Nantes to see it." He called the "Bertin" magnificent, but he went on, "I wouldn't take ten 'Bertins' for one 'Madame de Senonnes.' Compared to 'Madame de Senonnes' the other is so much confectionery." I rejoice in the freedom, the open-mindedness, and, I repeat, the gusto with which he went through life. He simply didn't know the meaning of convention. A traditionalist, as every great French artist is, he remained, notwithstanding, without a trace of routine in his make-up. A beautiful sincerity pervades his life and his art.

XVI

FORAIN

XVI

FORAIN

In some reminiscences of Degas which Walter Sickert published a few years ago, there was a brief passage telling what the master did with the printed work of his friend Forain. He took every number of "Le Figaro" that contained one of the drawings and placed it on a little mahogany table set apart in his studio for the purpose. There the papers were preserved, to accumulate as in a sanctuary. Himself a great draughtsman, Degas had in this way to recognize a peer. The episode is symbolical of that cult for Forain which persists wherever good drawing is appreciated. I have been a member of it all my life, and I have always been interested to observe its development in this country. This, however, was long in gaining any real impetus. The few collectors who cared for the artist's work somehow could not make their enthusiasm general. Not even a visit to this country could establish Forain in a wide-spread vogue. It was James Gordon Bennett, I believe, who got him over here in the early nineties, along with Paul Bourget, a rather incongruous companion. His visit was a nine days' wonder, hardly more than that. I once came upon an interesting souvenir of his stay in Newport, in the shape of a copy of "La Comédie Pari-

sienne" inscribed to "Monsieur Oliver Belmont." Bound in with it were half-a-dozen thumb-nail sketches of his host, light, glancing things. In their fleetingness they were characteristic of his American sojourn. But in recent years the cult has prospered. Forain's etchings and lithographs have found increasing favor with our amateurs.

I wish I could communicate to my reader something about the man, but biographical details are curiously sparse in his case. It seems incredible that a veteran of his distinction should not, long ago, have been made the subject of a rich monograph, but if it exists I have not discovered it. I write amid a perfect wilderness of Forain publications, portfolios, albums, and books. The precious catalogue of his etchings and lithographs compiled by Marcel Guerin in three stout volumes is at my elbow. His name is on the title-pages of English as well as French publications. Yet one may explore this wilderness with the utmost care and be scantily enough rewarded by those details which bring back a personality as well as a talent. It was only from a footnote of Mr. Campbell Dodgson's that I learned that Forain was born at Rheims, on October 23, 1852, and that, amusingly, is about all that the artist himself has seen fit to contribute to "Qui Etes-Vous?" He adds that he is a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and that he is a *dessinateur,* but that is all. From what stock he sprang, and what the circumstances were

that brought him at an early age to Paris, I do not know. His private life remains a sealed book, save that he has a repute for witty conversation, and is a devoted motorist, with a liking for high speed. His early career was that of a poor Bohemian who knew positive misery, but he has for many years lived in a handsome house on the Rue Spontini. Once he had definitively arrived—and his arrival was not too long delayed—fortune waited on him with both hands. He works untroubled by care in a studio that has been described as notably untidy and crowded with artistic impedimenta, but also notably spacious. In one of his earlier lithographs he depicts himself as wearing a beard and a mustache. From his garb also he would seem to have been at that time rather conventional in appearance, almost with a touch of fashion. Latterly he has gone clean-shaven, and from a fairly recent photograph, taken in his studio, he strikes one, in his long robe, his spectacles, and his broad-brimmed hat, as being an austere individuality with a faintly monkish tincture.

Information about the artist is more accessible than information about the man. It appears that he was born with an instinct for drawing, and by the time he was twelve or fourteen used to frequent the Louvre with a sketch-book. It was while he was engaged with it, one day, that old Jacquesson de la Chavreuse looked over his shoulder, and was so impressed by the promise in his work that he forthwith

hunted up the lad's parents and took him under his wing for instruction. Two years later a similar encounter in the same place landed him under the patronage of the sculptor Carpeaux, who seems particularly to have stimulated the power of observation which was rapidly to become one of the young artist's leading resources. I gather that in painting, his first experience was had in the studio of André Gill. But from that caricaturist he could not have learned much that could have served him with the brush, and I believe that he must have derived most of his inspiration in that formative period from the masters at the Louvre. At the same time that he was haunting the print room of the Bibliothèque Nationale to copy the classics of draughtsmanship and engraving, he was copying certain painters in the museum. Gustave Geffroy has told how Forain loved to emulate the line of Holbein, and how the plates of Goya came into his intelligence like a clap of thunder. I remember that when Vollard's big book about Cézanne came out, I read a passage in it that could not but stick in my mind. Cézanne told him that once when he was in the Louvre, back in the seventies, he saw Forain there making a copy of a Chardin! I have always wanted to see how Forain painted in those days, in that mood; and by almost unbelievable luck, I have had the chance. Going down to Pittsburgh in 1926, to see the International, at Carnegie Institute, I entered the French

STILL LIFE

FROM THE PAINTING BY FORAIN

section expecting the usual thing. There it was in the shape of a huge ambassadorial portrait by Besnard, the last word of the old Salon. But, cuddling unobtrusively beside it, was a little still-life by Forain, painted in 1873, perhaps the very year of Cézanne's anecdote, if not the very picture! Of course, I battened on it, and the interesting thing for me was that it showed Forain to have been a not unworthy disciple of Chardin. I do not pretend that it struck me as a masterpiece, but it had beauty of tone, it had both breadth and delicacy in handling, it had quality. How far could it be said to have foreshadowed the essential Forain? It is a complicated question.

He painted that still-life of his when he was twenty-one and, so to say, at the parting of the ways. He was sitting ardently at the feet of the old masters and they were nurturing in him ideas of sound workmanship which were to stay with him all his life long. He was being grounded in the integrity of technique and, incidentally, developing a certain intellectual seriousness which he was never to lose. But he was young, a Parisian, and in temperament nothing if not modern. Impressionism was in the air. At the Nouvelle Athènes he fell in with Manet, Degas, and Marcelin Desboutin. By 1879 he was exhibiting with them and the rest of what was then the most progressive group in Paris. His best friend and backer in the literary wing was Huysmans, the intensely *raffiné* author of "A

Rebours." He was launched in a world far removed from that of Chardin, and though I cannot find that the luminosity of Monet entered into his hypothesis of painting, he undoubtedly adjusted himself to the swift, spontaneous notation of actuality which is a prime characteristic of Impressionism. He has deviated occasionally from the broad movement of the school. I have seen a painting of his done in the early eighties, a subject drawn from fashionable life, which in style might have come from a conventional Salonnier. It wasn't like him. In his natural gait as a painter he has been all for freedom, boldness, and an almost rough, summary touch. Sometimes the elegance which is part of his make-up will temper the force of his brush, but as a rule, and especially in his later years, he has been almost as stenographic in color as in black and white, much nearer to Manet than to Chardin. All the time—and this is, perhaps, the most significant commentary on his canvases—he oscillates between painter's painting and the painting of the man who is primarily an artist in black and white. It is not an accident that his paintings are low in key. He didn't get that from Chardin alone, either. It is the natural outcome of his life-long activity as a draughtsman, etcher, and lithographer. Though his paintings have a legitimate existence of their own, they do not have quite the status with him that, for example, Daumier's paintings have in *his* cosmos. They are interesting, they

excite admiration, but they do not obscure the fact that the transcendent elements of Forain's genius reside in his drawings.

Appreciation of the drawings, I think, is heightened by some consideration of the *milieu* from which they have sprung. The giants in that *milieu,* of course, are Daumier and Gavarni, Forain's predecessors. The field of French satire has been tolerably crowded since their day, and in the crowd there have been numerous brilliant figures. Toulouse-Lautrec, Steinlen, Louis Legrand, Willette, Léandre, and divers others have vividly expressed the spirit of Montmartre. Nor must we forget the Parisianized Russian, Caran d'Ache. He, by the way, made a most effective collaborator with Forain in the celebrated "Psst . . .!" of the Dreyfus days. But to call up in mental review the ideas of philosophy and style associated with these draughtsmen is to be struck at once by Forain's singularity among them. He alone seems to be free from the strain of personal idiosyncrasy. There is something wistful about Willette. There is a homely quality in Steinlen. Léandre has a repulsive side to his power. Toulouse-Lautrec gives you the uncomfortable sensation of feeling that he is steeped to the soul in the vicious stuff in which he works. Forain detaches himself from his colleagues as he detaches himself from his subject, functioning in the rôle of a passionless observer. He has known prejudice, as in the Dreyfus time, but his career at large

has been that of a man holding no briefs. Only in the Great War did he double the character of the artist with that of the patriot. Otherwise he has disinterestedly, I might almost say cold-bloodedly, held the mirror up to nature. There is little in him of that gaiety of Gavarni which points to sympathy for the blithe human spectacle, and if there is an echo in him of the ferocity of Daumier, it is unwarmed by that master's generous wrath. No; his savagery seems scientifically poised. He wields a kind of sterilized scalpel. His understanding of human nature is apparently boundless, but although he has tenderness and can use it when he wishes, the fundamental power of the man seems to me to lie in a kind of glacial research. It is not precisely cynical but it is, I repeat, profoundly dispassionate.

I must pause here to avoid the conveyance of a false impression, and touch upon those passages in his work which show that he can be tender when he chooses. In those of his paintings which deal with court-room scenes he can make successfully the grimly emotional appeal liberated by crime or misfortune in the clutch of the law. He has touchingly embodied the pathos of poverty. No Frenchman of his time better than he has delineated the awfulness of death. In his etchings of Scriptural subjects he has plumbed some of the depths of devotional art. His Rembrandtesque Christ is a wonderfully moving creation, one of the indubitable modern contributions to Biblical icon-

ography. His religious subjects have dramatic force besides. Then in his war drawings Forain unquestionably rose to heights. He made them with burning sympathy. There is much tragic stuff in Forain, and, in short, it would be grotesque to conceive of him as a man who did not feel. But if I say all this with unqualified earnestness, and in gratitude for many a design that touches the heart, I say it also as it were in passing, because it is not strictly relevant to what lies at the core of the matter. That is the serene aloofness to which I have referred, the impersonal operation of a seeing eye and an unerring hand. In other words, the great Forain is the great technician.

He differs from some masters of line in two respects. In the first place, it took him longer, I think, than it takes most born draughtsmen to get into his linear stride. A positive gulf divides the earlier and later designs contributed by him to a host of periodicals. Secondly, his line has not always preserved what I may call a personal unity. I cannot go along with the more fervid connoisseurs of the etchings. They do not seem to me to denote absolutely conclusive puissance with the needle. The line is sometimes strong, but it is sometimes feeble if not meaningless, and it frequently lapses into confusion. Turn to the drawings, however, and presently you have done with distinctions, finding unalloyed joy in Forain's linear brilliance. The tale begins, roughly, with the collection of 250 designs published under the title of "La

Comédie Parisienne," in 1892; it is continued in the 188 pages of the second series, issued under the same designation a few years later, and Forain is if anything more triumphant in the "Doux Pays" of 1897. But the climax is marked by his war drawings. In them it is as though Forain faced the great theme of his life, and, summoning all his technical resources, rose to the pitch of its adequate celebration. For several decades he had been dabbling in the rather acrid humors of Parisian life, portraying hordes of its basest types, interpreting some of the pettiest phases of its vice. There is no sunshine and there is little wholesome laughter in the great body of Forain's work. He wakes, rather, the sinister or cynical chuckle. His people walk in shadow and are shady company at the best. The war released him from all that. Dedicated from his youth, as I have indicated, to a certain gravity of mind and imagination, the tremendous crisis of his older years found him fitted to celebrate it with dignity, pity, and a noble rage. He avoided, withal, the dangers of exaggeration. A terrible truth is stamped upon his war drawings. It is the more impressive because it is set forth with such humanness, with such tragic sincerity, with so simple a stroke. It is on the simplicity of the stroke above all that the lover of Forain's draughtsmanship must pause.

That is where his line comes in, the terse, epigrammatic line by which he lives. Whistler must have

known him and cherished him as a proof of his old saying that the artist is known by what he omits. With a few brief touches Forain puts the subject before you, and the linear language he employs is not only eloquent but has the beauty and the distinction which such a language must possess if it is to prevail. It is a keen, dry idiom that he uses, economical, precise, vivacious, not exactly supple, yet with a great fund of nervous energy unmistakably behind it. It is intensely modern, and it has a peculiar vitality. Compare it for a moment with the polished elegance of a draughtsman like Helleu. That individual's art seems restricted within the confines of a very limited world. It rustles with the *frou-frou* of the drawing-room and the boudoir, and somehow it "dates." It is different with Forain. Something of the accent of universality lies upon his linear speech. He states enduring truth in the concise, lucid terms of almost the Chinese tradition. I have spoken of his occupying a place apart in the perspective of Montmartre. He occupies a place apart in the view that takes in the whole range of European draughtsmanship. He will be remembered, I believe, long after most of his immediate colleagues. He will be remembered with forerunners of his like Daumier and Gavarni, and with such men of other schools as Menzel and Charles Keene.

XVII

MONTICELLI

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MONTICELLI

ADOLPHE MONTICELLI occupies a place apart in French painting and too little is ordinarily seen of his work. Yet he has been appreciated here quite as much as in his native land. It is, in fact, impossible to speak of him without recalling the manner of his introduction to American collectors. The late Daniel Cottier was peculiarly responsible for that. He was a dealer with taste if ever there was one, and forty years ago he was active in pressing the merits of Monticelli upon our amateurs. Having the discrimination which goes with taste, he brought over superb examples and for some time there existed here something like a cult for the painter.

He was born at Marseilles on October 14, 1824. He had a career diversified by comparatively few incidents and the latest biography, that published by Gustave Coquiot, is richer in rhetorical padding than in tangible information. The frontispiece, by the way, takes the shape of a singularly interesting portrait of Monticelli as a young man. He is most conventionally habited, sits rather stiffly, and with his beard, mustache and carefully brushed hair looks like a kind of sedate Alfred de Musset. He was a man of breeding, coming of old Venetian ancestry, and, though details of his family life are obscure,

he seems to have been brought up in sympathetic surroundings, being encouraged at an early age to follow the artistic bent that then declared itself. The good-will of his parents, however, was not matched by particularly inspiring talents in the local school, to which he was promptly admitted. M. Coquiot names some of the leaders in the old artistic circle at Marseilles. They have all long since gone down the wind, leaving no memory save that of a rather hollow academic hypothesis. Monticelli learned the rudiments well enough, but there was no stimulating influence to be received from his instructors. By the time he was twenty-three he was ready to seek wider horizons at Paris. There, oddly enough, he gravitated to the atelier of Paul Delaroche, that assiduous painter of sentimentalized historical subjects. In the presence of Monticelli's pictures this early association strikes the observer as one of the most curious episodes in artistic biography, as curious as the brief alliance of Whistler and Gleyre, the disciple of Ingres.

Fortunately, there were other forces active upon the scene. He frequented the Louvre, where he discovered, among others, Watteau. He tasted the delights of the old masters before he went back to Provence, rambling on foot, making portraits and landscapes by the way—and selling them. He was back in Paris, however, in 1856, and fell into the hands of the Fontainebleau group, especially those of Diaz.

Corot and Troyon were his friends, the counsels of the former being especially helpful. Even when he didn't wholly adopt them, as M. Coquiot remarks, they opened luminous perspectives. He knew Courbet and Ziem, also, and looked with a kindling eye upon the works of Delacroix and Bonington. Reflecting on all these contacts, and on the fact that he made a lot of copies when he went to Italy, as he did in the course of his studies at the Louvre, one expects him to reveal some external influences in the formation of his own style. The truth is that neither the old masters nor his contemporaries seem to have left any decisive impression upon him, unless possibly we are able to recognize in some of his phases the faint influence of Watteau. The determining element in his experience was all the time just the sensuous fervor and glow of his native Marseilles, a city poor, no doubt, in masters, but rich in an appeal fit to stir a master. It abounded in color, and Monticelli was a born colorist.

There is something deeply interesting about the nature of the foundations of his art. With his temperament it would seem as if he were bound to drift at once into the composition of abstract harmonies. Instead of that he began by painting solidly constructed landscapes. There is a picture of his, "The Farm Yard," which he painted in England, in collaboration with Matthew Maris. The work of the latter is recognizable at the right, leaving the main

part of the composition unmistakably Monticelli's. It is as well built, as clearly a matter of careful observation, as though it had been painted by Rembrandt, whose rich browns it recalls. Repeatedly in Monticelli you come upon these evidences of a patient solicitude for form. But they do not make his most representative cosmos. That is one in which he sees things so emphatically in terms of color, and in color alone, that the status of form, as form, rapidly dwindles and only vibrating hues prevail. He laid them on with a well-loaded brush, occasionally turning to the palette knife. The impasto of Monticelli has a Dutch weight and richness. In a landscape he defines his facts as though with waves of color and in those scenes in which architecture supplies a background for romantic groups, functioning more or less in the manner of a theatrical drop, you think again less of drawing than of his amazing reds, blues and greens.

His landscapes and his pieces of still-life had their vogue, and deserved it. An engaging truth shines forth through their prismatic loveliness. But it was when he dipped his brush into the glamour of that age which saw the Provençal troubadours, when he painted the *fête galante* and interpreted its curious poesy, that he did the things that made him famous. This makes M. Coquiot a little unhappy. He does not give the palm to *le peintre des pares avec personnages*. So much the worse, it is to be feared,

for M. Coquiot. The park scenes happen to be merely enchanting. They are the scenes in which Monticelli most felicitously proclaims himself akin to Watteau, reviving something of that grace, that light-flashing elegance, which we owe to the master of Valenciennes. Only, it is important to observe that, as has already been indicated, Monticelli retains his individual note. He drew it, indeed, not from any painted precedent, but straight from the sunshine that enlivened his beloved port, from the sunshine and from his own genius. Did his imagination in any way promote its development? It is difficult to say. He peoples his scenes with figures that in a sense are creations, and the way he has of exercising an Oriental spell or one suggestive of pure romance implies a certain poetic faculty. But, on the whole, his types seem less embodiments of ideas than gracious properties, proceeding out of emotional rather than cerebral activity and indicative not so much of the dreamer of dreams as of the dabbler in delicate sensation. Now and then, especially when he was painting a landscape, a portrait or a few objects of still-life, he is the faithful student of nature, keeping his eye on the object. More typically he is the sheer devotee of color, whelming the subject in an investiture of the subtlest pigment. He puts the melodic shimmerings of a Debussy on canvas, more robustly but with the same central passion for sensuous delight.

To that vocation he settled down at Marseilles, becoming a rather picturesque eccentric as time went on. He lived sparely, in a single room, making an original figure on his frequent walks abroad and puzzling interlocutors by his strange sayings. Like Stendhal, he had ideas about his future. *Je peins pour dans trente ans,* he was wont to say. It has been said that his mind gave out in the last five years of his life, but while M. Coquiot admits that his genius declined during this period, he doubts the dementia and cites an old comrade of the painter's, the artist Maglione, as affirming that he never could perceive the slightest mental disorder in his friend. It is more likely that he became a little tired of life, a little hypochondriacal. He died in his modest lodging on the Rue de Senac, June 29, 1886, and, as his biographer says, there was thereupon one glorious artist the less upon earth. For there is a trace of the "glorious" in his art. It flames delicately, but vitally. In some of his pictures he is as jewelled as Diaz and twice as suave, twice as subtle. Impetuous improvisatore as he was, there was nevertheless a tender magic in his touch.

XVIII

BARBIZON

XVIII

BARBIZON

At a time when ideals of art, like everything else in our modern world, are challenged by the demands of a new generation, it is interesting to examine into the fortunes of a school once held extraordinarily high in public favor. I refer to the group loosely but familiarly known as the Barbizon school, the group embracing Corot, Rousseau, and their friends, and I am especially concerned to note its status in the eyes of the American collector. Back in the 80's these painters rode the crest of the wave. The foundations of their vogue have been well and securely laid by certain enlightened connoisseurs and dealers. Their pictures were the great prizes of the auction-room. Meanwhile, in Paris, something like a formal consecration of the subject had been organized. The exhibition there, in the Rue de Séze, in June, 1883, of a hundred French masterpieces, had been peculiarly strong in works of the historic figures to whom I allude. "Here were assembled in a spacious gallery some eighty of the choicest pearls of the greatest period of modern art. Never had such a representation been seen of the phalanx of 1830. It was the final ceremony that proclaimed and fixed the domain which had been conquered and shared by Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, Millet, Daubigny, Fro-

mentin, Delacroix, Troyon, and Decamps—the art of modern France." There was a printed memorial of it, of course, the "Cent Chefs-d'Œuvre," and part of the significance of the words I have just quoted lies in their source. I take them from the introduction to a little volume which the late Henry M. Walters, of Baltimore, had privately printed in 1886, a translation of the text that Albert Wolff wrote for the memorial volume just mentioned. An eager collector of Barbizon masterpieces, Mr. Walters characteristically did what he could to establish their legend here. The printing of his brochure was in some sort an act of faith. For him—and for many other American collectors—the trivialities of the Paris Salon had withered up. With a landscape painted at Ville D'Avray, along the Oise, or amid the oaks of Fontainebleau, a new heaven and a new earth had been ushered in. American taste had achieved another landmark.

How did it fare? For some years it was apparently unshaken. Then the Impressionists came more and more into view, Monet and Manet, Degas and Renoir. They did not, for they could not, discredit their predecessors, but a new fashion never comes into being without lessening the sway of an older one, and in more recent years the cult for Cézanne and the varied developments of modernism have served to make Barbizon seem, in some quarters at least, "old hat." I have had many an occasion to observe a

subsidence of that enthusiasm which I have indicated as formerly rampant. Only the other day a distinguished collector said to me that in his opinion Corot was the sole man in the group to "stand up" under the passage of time. I shall presently have circumstances to mention which would seem to sustain his contention. But there are further views to be taken of the matter, light on which may be drawn from the field in which the pre-eminence of Corot is particularly marked, the field of the auction-room. The appeal to figures in the domain of art may easily be overdone, may easily be made gravely misleading. Nevertheless there are cases in which it has its just function, and this, I believe, is one of them. Briefly stated, if the prices paid in the auction-room are to be taken as reflecting the taste and confidence of collectors, then the Barbizon painters have, on the whole, held their own. I say this in spite of the fact that instances of depreciation are undoubtedly to be cited.

The question of the stability of the school in the market was first brought conspicuously forward, in the last few years, when the collection of Mr. C. K. G. Billings was sold in January, 1926, by the American Art Association. Fourteen of the thirty-one pictures disposed of were works of the Barbizon men, and they fetched a total of $290,000, nearly three-quarters of the $401,300 paid for the entire collection. I give first some of the figures for Corot.

"Les Baigneuses des Iles Borromées" brought $50,000; "Le Cavalier dans la Campagne," $30,000; "Le Lac—Effet de Matin," $21,500. Rousseau's "Bosquet d'Arbres" was sold for $25,000, and Daubigny's "La Saulaie" for $12,500. Millet's "Haystacks" rose to $26,000 and Troyon's "La Charette de Foin" to $16,500. I might cite other good prices, but these are enough to characterize the testimony offered by the Billings sale. They show that, "old hat" or not, the painters of Barbizon were still appreciated, still valued, still prime factors in the market. They have been rivalled, as I have pointed out, by the Impressionists, and both groups, I may add in passing, have been portentously overshadowed by the old masters. But when $50,500 is paid for a Corot, $25,000 for a Rousseau, and $26,000 for a Millet, it is plain enough that the public of these artists has not disappeared.

It was duly on the scene, at the Anderson Galleries, in March, 1928, when the paintings assembled by the late Charles H. Senff were dispersed. This amateur had bought most of his pictures in the period from 1889 to 1899. He had about thirty Barbizon works, all of them good and some of them very fine. The Corots, as my friend's remark suggests, "stood up." Thanks to a table in *The Art News* comparing the prices received with those which Mr. Senff is understood to have paid, I am able to record some curious mutations. The eight Corots, without exception,

registered an advance. The superb "Woman Reading" had cost the collector $4,000. His niece, Mrs. Louise Senff Cameron, bid on it at the sale so that she might present it to the Metropolitan Museum, and the competition was so lively that she had to pay $31,000 for it. Governor Fuller paid $26,000 for the "Nymphs Bathing," which had cost Mr. Senff $18,000. Turning from the old figures to the new, we find that "Morning Fisherman" jumped from $6,000 to $12,500, the "Lake Albano" from $6,300 to $12,500, the "Eventide" from $16,000 to $21,000, and so on. One of the six Duprés showed a trifling advance, but the others marked serious losses, and the highest price given for any one of them was only $3,300. Daubigny was in much the same case, though one of his pictures, "Summer Day on the Oise," fetched $7,600. The high-water mark amongst the three Rousseaus, $6,000, was rather disconcerting, in view of the fact that Mr. Senff had paid $10,000 for the picture, "A Red Sunset After a Rainy Day." Diaz, too, going as high as $4,500 in one instance, was none the less the victim of a drop. Millet stood fairly firm. Mr. Senff had paid $1,600 for the "Maternity," a drawing, and it brought $1,800. The net effect of the affair was not, however, depressing, especially as the collection was not one of uniformly important pieces. The lowest prices were not contemptible, and the sale left Barbizon, as it seemed to me, still with its place in the sun.

I watched with a certain confidence for the prices to be attained by the six or seven paintings of this school in the Elbert H. Gary sale held by the American Art Association in April, 1928. Corot again was to the fore, the "Matin: Etang de Ville D'Avray" selling for $32,000, and his "Souvenir du Bords des Lac de Garde" for $19,000. A Daubigny, "Bords de L'Oise a Conflans," went for $23,000, and another picture of his for $8,000. The two Rousseaus commanded only modest prices, one going at $4,300 and the other at $4,600, the latter being rather difficult to understand, for the "Earth, Trees and Sky" bringing that price struck me as a really notable example. Millet once more, as in the Senff sale, maintained himself. "Les Bucherons" sold for $10,000.

What is the moral of these diverse figures? That some Barbizon pictures, as has been shown, are not, commercially speaking, what they once were, but that in the main they remain living quantities. Taking all the elements of the situation into consideration, the change in fashion, the varying desirability of this or that example (a crucial point), the virtually complete alteration in the key of light in landscape art which the influence of the Impressionists brought about, it must be admitted that the Barbizon school has lost nothing fundamental. Its period may not seem to-day, as it seemed in 1886, the year of the exhibition aforementioned, "the greatest period of modern art," but it is one which the world obviously

will not let die. It is worth while to reflect upon the reasons for this.

The solidarity of a school is not the primary cause of its success. That is attributable essentially to the individual traits of the men who make it. A great school does not regiment its members. It leans, rather, upon the original force which each has to contribute. It is the original, profoundly personal quality of Corot that keeps him so magnificently alive, that and his adherence to what makes the ground-swell of any golden epoch in art. He was, I suppose, what some commentators to-day would call an old-fashioned type. "Never paint a subject," he was wont to say, "unless it calls insistently and distinctly upon your eye and heart." I can hear a certain sort of modern painter asking what on earth "heart" had to do with it. But Corot knew what he was about, and especially he knew that a work of art is the product of the whole man, of his character as well as of his dexterity, an expression of emotion as well as of æsthetic principle. His biography is dotted with sayings that point to a pondered, constructive habit of painting. *Vive la conscience, vive la simplicité!* he exclaims, and when you come to close quarters with the craftsman in this seemingly spontaneous, lyric poet you find that, as befits a countryman of Poussin, he is nothing if not a builder of design. "I never hurry to the details of a picture," he declares. "Its masses and general character in-

terest me before everything else. When those are well established, I search out the subtleties of form and color. Incessantly and without system I return to any and every part of my canvas." How French all that is, and how traditional! It gives, too, the key to Corot's liberation of an intensely personal inspiration. He can speak for himself because he knows the language of art, the sane, ordered language which runs through French painting for centuries. He has an ardor and a magic all his own. He sees nature exquisitely. His approach is imaginative. But he has a heart and a mind as well as an eye, he has a conscience, and so he is all for a sound, truthful method of picture-making. The tremulous foliage so characteristic of him, the shimmering silvery light that is almost a mannerism, is subordinate to a structural purpose. This master, whose soul is as free as a bird's, whose pictures are, indeed, like so many songs, is at bottom a stanch conservative. Listen to this outburst of his: "Ah, *Messieurs les artistes modernes,* God is not pleased with you, far from pleased! Ah, how could He be! He gives you the beauties of nature to see and paint, and you change them, you spoil them. Very well then, my friends, to punish you God will turn your hearts into hearts of cork. God has given you the most beautiful canons, and you bungle them. He will not give them to you any more."

Strange talk, I am sure, this must seem in the ears of your devout follower of a Cézanne, or a Picasso,

or a Matisse, but the genius behind it will long win its way with the mere lover of beauty. For that genius was firm-founded upon the integrity of art, on fidelity to nature, on sound technique, and on the divine sanction of style. It is so with the whole valiant company. They all have things to say, interesting, characteristic things—and they all play the game. Rousseau is as fresh, as new-minted, a personality as Corot, as brilliant a dramatizer of the splendors of sunset as his colleague is tenderly sensitive in the interpretation of twilight, and he, too, carried into his work the immemorial French custom of "conscience" and thoughtful research. He is the outstanding master of ground and tree forms. I love the title of that picture that figured in the Senff sale, "Earth, Trees and Sky." Whether Rousseau himself invented it or not, it exactly expresses the primitive elements in which he dealt. Like Corot, he was a shrewd builder of compositions, and even more than Corot he was wont to hunt down the last nuance of form in the elusive fabric of his theme. There is something amazing about the discretion with which he adjusts this to the demands of the "masses and general character," about his fusion of analytical with synthetic ideas. These two masters are the giants of the landscape men in the group. There is a little drop in the matter of central, individual power when you turn from them to the chromatic glamour of Diaz and the pastoral serenities of

Daubigny. Millet alone is of their potency. He, indeed, reaches in his massy handling of human types a Michael Angelesque grandeur of style which gives him a noble place apart. But he also, and with him the lesser workers in that famous band, may be cited in illustration of the virtue which to my mind is as significant as any in the durability of a school as a school.

They were all, in their differing ways and in accordance with their differing degrees of power, united on the principle of painting a picture interesting to mankind. None of them stooped to please. Even the bejewelled web of Diaz, which might seem to be deliberately addressed to a popular audience, is really validated by the temperament of the man. No, they painted with heart, with human sympathy, with solicitude for charm and beauty, with dramatic or poetic or merely truthful intent, because they knew that art is made for the world at large. To judge from much latter-day talk, it would appear that a picture should be painted not so much for the *cognoscenti,* as they were broadly designated in an earlier time, but for an even more limited circle, composed of a few dogmatic leaders, the emulators of their pattern, and a number of crassly doctrinaire critics. Such a picture, supposed to be a matter of "self-expression," actually conforms with deadly docility to some current mode. Above all things it disdains the art of pleasing. The men of Barbizon

were wiser in their day and generation. I have glanced at the honest, traditional principles underlying their works and preserving their vitality. Besides these things, I think that the reason why thousands of people to-day—including a due number of collectors—are persistently faithful to them is that their pictures are, simply, good to look at.

XIX

ANTONIO MANCINI

XIX

ANTONIO MANCINI

THE preferences of an artist are among the most interesting things disclosed by his biography. What could be more revealing than the adoration which Degas had for the genius of Ingres? Is there, again, anything more characteristic of the earlier draughtsman than his love for Raphael? Whistler, for all his loquacity, was reticent enough about his likes, if not about his dislikes, but he spoke out now and then, with the result that we know that types as varied as Tintoretto, Rembrandt and Hokusai figured in his cosmos, and, for my own part, this knowledge has always counted in my approach to his art. What of Sargent's tastes? He must have had plenty of them, for he went through life with a great play of mind, but he was not given at all to public speech and, thanks to his invincible reserve, hardly any of his critical judgments found their way to the outside world. Where his predilections lay among the masters of the past was to be inferred in a measure from his work. That showed his concern with the principles of Velasquez and Hals, and when his studio effects were dispersed after his death, it was no surprise to learn that he had made copies from both. In modern art, by the same process, it was presumable that he was a sym-

pathetic comrade to Claude Monet and Helleu. He painted pictures of them both at work. But there was just one contemporary of his for whom he would seem to have cherished such an enthusiasm that it overflowed his usual bounds, became articulate, and passed into common knowledge. This was the Italian, Antonio Mancini. Allusion to this admiration was made by more than one commentator when Sargent died. It had been mentioned so often previously that it had come to mean something characteristic.

In 1920 the Italian art journal *La Fiamma* devoted an entire number to a laudatory symposium on Mancini, assembling eulogies by most of the leading artists and writers of the country. The letter from D'Annunzio sprawled in facsimile across the page under this fervid legend: *Il Piu Grande Poeta Vivente per il Piu Grande Pittore Vivente.* That was gorgeous enough in all conscience, but in the following year *La Fiamma* reprinted all those tributes to *Il Maestro del Colore* in a handsome, illustrated brochure, and among the additions there was given from Sargent as glowing a line as any in the book: "I have met in Italy the greatest living painter, Antonio Mancini." That, I confess, has puzzled me in the extreme. I could understand the furore among the Italians. Mancini, an important man, has been doubly important for them. But "the greatest living painter"! That, from Sargent, surely "makes

furiously to think." Did he say just that or did his words suffer some mysterious sea-change? I impugn nobody's good faith, and least of all his. But I'll admit that I wanted some confirmation, paradoxically, more persuasive than "cold type," and I have been making inquiries among intimates of his who across long periods of years knew his habit of mind. One of them writes to me: "I recall hearing John Sargent speak with admiration of Mancini—and more than once. I should not call it a tremendous ardor, for he reserved that for El Greco, with Boldini sandwiched in between the two. But you must be nearer right than I if you have seen a statement from Sargent intimating tremendous ardor—and entirely safe in transmitting it." For another old comrade of the painter's—in whose own collection there hang several Mancinis—I have received this interesting note: "He *did* have a great admiration for Mancini, owned some himself, and never passed these canvases by without looking at them and commenting on their particular charm and vigor and brilliancy. I always felt that he got something out of Mancini which he didn't have himself. But it was the same with Monet—he saw qualities which helped his own vision, and that is something so intangible." Intangible for me and not at all clear remains the secret that Sargent apprehended and that made him call Mancini "the greatest living painter." For the life of me I cannot see the Italian in that light. I

say so, it is perhaps proper to add, not from any vainglorious desire to oppose my judgment to Sargent's, but I must have my own judgments, and, as Andrew Lang used to say, we all have a right to exist—we and our works. I find Mancini a remarkable enough artist, even though I think that the greatest painter living in Mancini's time was John Sargent. I ought to mention, too, that I've been looking at Mancini's works all my life, in European and American exhibitions. With these preliminaries I may turn to some consideration of the artist and his art.

He was born at Rome in 1852, but appears to have been taken thence in infancy and grew up at Narni, the little Umbrian hill town which gave Gattamelata to the fifteenth century. From the *brochure* aforementioned I gather, what is comprehensible enough, that there was no one there to teach him. The old paintings in the cathedral apparently had nothing to say to him, for his biographer states that he was first predisposed toward the art of painting by his delight in the color and movement in a gypsy circus. As a young man he proceeded to Naples, where he developed an obvious talent under the sound discipline of Domenico Morelli. An eruption of Vesuvius drove him from Naples, evidently because the dimming of the sun preyed upon his spirit. He proceeded to Paris, where he fell into the friendly hands of the Goupils, and where good fortune even more happily came to him in the patronage of the Dutch Mesdag.

That painter seems to have given him a regular income, thus assembling a collection of his works which he ultimately gave to the Museum at The Hague. A later episode in his career was a long and profitable stay in England under the auspices of the late Hugh Lane, *e con la presentazione entusiasta di un pittore caro alla grande aristocrazia inglese—Sargent.* At home he has labored in Venice as well as in Naples, but it is his native Rome that most claims him. Besides being held in honor there and all over Italy—his portrait, painted by himself, is in the Uffizi—he has had the satisfaction of seeing his pictures pass into most of the European museums of modern art. One of his best things, by the way, "The Circus Boy," is in our own Metropolitan. He is represented in the Boston Museum and Mrs. Gardner obtained a fine example for Fenway Court.

There was a period in his career—I judge it to have been when he was under the more exacting influence of Morelli—during which he practised a rather minute realism, well illustrated in "La Douane." Every last detail is meticulously stated. He pays as much attention to the nail-heads in the iron-bound trunk as he does to the features and costume of the woman who sits on the lid of that receptacle. He works in the vein which has been characteristic of a great deal of modern Italian art, but very soon his style broadens, he finds himself, and beats out a path of his own, along which he has progressed ever

since, developing an unforced originality. I must break off here to borrow from Lady Gregory a passage which gives us a piquant glimpse of the man and his methods. In the memoir of her nephew, Hugh Lane, she thus tells how the Italian painted her portrait when Lane brought him over in 1905:

Having established Mancini and his easel in that large room of the Dublin Gallery, he set him to paint his sister, Ruth Shine's portrait, and then mine. I sat in a high chair in an old black dress, in front of a brown curtain lent by Miss Purser. Mancini set up a frame in front of me. He pinned many threads to this, crossing one another; their number increased from day to day, becoming a close network. This—as he would explain in almost incomprehensible French, though sometimes turning to little less comprehensible Italian—was not his own method, but had been the method of some great master. Having put up a new thread or two, he would go to the very end of the long room, look at me through my net, then began a hurried walk which turned to a quick trot, his brush aimed at some feature, eye or eyebrow; the last steps would be a rush, then I needed courage to sit still. But the hand holding the brush always swerved at the last moment to the canvas, and there in its appropriate place, between its threads, the paint would be laid on and the retreat would begin. I was well repaid for my patience or courage, for at the end his portrait of a woman growing old, and a dusty black dress and a faded brown curtain would have lighted up a prison cell. Synge, not often

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FROM THE PORTRAIT BY HIMSELF IN THE UFFIZI

enthusiastic, spoke of it as "the greatest portrait since Rembrandt."

Lady Gregory has some other amusing notes. He was an odd man, Mancini, apparently believing in the Evil Eye or something like it. He fancied that he would catch the illness or deformity of one with whom he came in contact. Painting somebody with a cork leg, he surmised that that member was having a numbing effect on his own, and at intervals exclaimed: "My leg is losing all power of sensation!" Lane had once startled the old gentlemen of his club by bringing in Augustus John in blue jersey and gold earrings, and so he deliberated before giving the habitués another surprise. "But," says Lady Gregory, "when at last he brought in Mancini, half hoping that the elderly round-shouldered little man might fit better into its composition, Mancini, always doing what was least expected, put his hand on his heart, went up to each chair in succession, and bowed low to its occupant." He was taken into the house of a friend of Sargent's, who in order that he might not be lonely hired another Italian who served her as a footman. The two became bosom friends, but presently, when Lady Gregory met Lane one day, he was in great perplexity. The good-hearted lady who had given shelter to Mancini "had written to say that the friends had quarrelled and that this mattered greatly, because they both took up and threw at each other

ornaments and bric-à-brac in her rooms which were valuable."

Both in the foregoing drolleries and in the serious picture of Mancini at work there are elements contributing toward a sympathetic apprehension of his individuality. There is carefulness in him, as the serried threads show, and there is *furia.* It is the latter trait, I think, that accounts for his breadth, for the large and robust way in which he sees form and bodies it forth. It was not for nothing that Morelli put him through his paces, initiating him into the mysteries of modelling and fostering in him especially his gift for honest draughtsmanship. There is a satisfying solidity about Mancini's figures, and sometimes they are not only strongly but beautifully drawn. He has unmistakable truth, and that truth possesses a positively rich vitality. It is proof of this that his works maintain their interest for the beholder, despite the fact that he displays no great range of subject and has, indeed, little, if any, imaginative power. His "John the Baptist" in the Boston Museum is like the "Italian Peasant Boy" in the same place, just the portrait of a picturesque model. But he tinctures with something romantic the realism of his theme; he overlays upon the faithfully portrayed fact the charm of his originality, the glamour of his loosely flowing yet somehow close-knit style. In his later period his looseness has grown excessive and the close-knit web of tone has lost much of its

clarity and fineness. He has grown coarse where he was once gracious in texture, muddy where he used to be limpid, and upon his canvases, brush-work that was formerly brilliant has often proved fumbling and obscure. The declension there marked has told also in the matter of his color.

I have seen Mancinis that explained if they did not quite justify *La Fiamma's* trumpeting of Mancini to the world as *Il Maestro del Colore.* He is at his best, in fact, something like a master of color, the master of resonant blacks, of plangent reds, of bold and good blues and yellows. I love them—but I love them well this side of idolatry. They are impressive hues, those blacks and reds, those blues and yellows, but even at his best Mancini never gave them in fullest measure that ineffable ingredient which is known as "quality." Mancini's painted surface in what I take to be his middle period was extraordinarily refined, and so possessed a certain quality, a certain bloom, but for a long time it has too often been woolly and undistinguished. With a certain gross density the color which has always meant so much to him and proved so exciting to his compatriots has been more exciting than persuasive; to put it bluntly, it has become violent and crude.

Withal he remains one of the singular and fascinating figures in European painting, and in Italian art he occupies unquestionably a commanding position. The modern school has been none too rich in

salient types. The long decline that set in after the disappearance of Tiepolo was mitigated but not transmogrified by the rise of Canova, and the classicists like Camuccini are to-day only names in encyclopædias. Morelli, coming into view at Naples back in the '40's, was a sincere and able painter, but hardly a creative genius. His rôle was not so much to produce masterpieces as to establish an honorable tradition of workmanship. There have been some highly proficient craftsmen in modern Italian painting. Maccari produced in his famous "Cicero and Catiline" for the Senate at Rome a fine composition, finely executed, such as the most expert French *Salonnier* might have been glad to paint. But there have been in Italy very few temperaments like the sparkling Michetti or like Segantini, the elegiac Millet of the Brianza. Too frequently the Italian has gone off after the will-o'-the-wisp of a specious dexterity, painting little pictures of little things even when he has painted them on a large scale. Only Boldini, like the Spanish Fortuny, has gone on to show that manual dexterity may be raised to a higher power and developed into a superb *maestria.* Boldini is, indeed, the only figure of Mancini's generation comparable to him in what I may call international significance. And Boldini must yield to Mancini as embodying an inspiration for the new generation that is to-day making a more conspicuous place for the painting of its country, the generation that has given us Favai,

Oppi, Scattola, Romagnoli, Emma Ciardi, Italico Brass, Noci, and so on among the new pioneers. It is that breadth of Mancini's to which I have referred, that breadth of his with its accent of freedom and *fortezza,* that whole-hearted gusto of his for color—if not his every expression of it—in which I see a liberating influence playing its part in the studios of the younger men. At a time when the school has been wofully tempted to deviate into filigree he has stood for something nobler, something more human, something directing his juniors to the better things they are now doing. I wonder if there lies the "something so intangible" that captured John Sargent, the something intangible that makes a freemasonry among great artists.

XX

HOGARTH

XX

HOGARTH

THE fates are sometimes very kind to the collector of artistic sensations. Not long ago I found myself thinking persistently of Hogarth. The memory of his incomparable "Shrimp Girl" kept recurring to me again and again, and with it there sprang into life recollections of the painter at more than one point in London, but especially at the Soane Museum. Incidentally I wondered why one so seldom heard of a Hogarth in this country. The "Price Family," a charming but not precisely momentous example of him, is at the Metropolitan, and Mr. Morgan owns "The Lady's Last Stake," but the painter has not particularly appealed to American collectors. A little puzzled over this, I made inquiry of a leading dealer in eighteenth-century English art. He had brought over many masterpieces of the period. Why had he never brought us a Hogarth? "Because," he replied, "a first-rate Hogarth is unprocurable." Then those kindly fates stepped in. The very next week I saw at the Knoedler Gallery a Hogarth of high rank!

It is a picture of "The Wedding of Stephen Beckingham and Mary Cox." The marriage commemorated is entered in the parish registers of St. Benet's, Paul's Wharf, London, under date of June 9, 1729.

Hogarth was then only a year or two past thirty, but he was already a polished craftsman. The fluent precision of the ornate architectural background in the picture shows that, and the point is even more emphatically enforced in the painting of the costumes. These are, indeed, *painted,* denoting the activity and the flair of the born brushman. The color scheme is not very original, but it has quality. Hogarth was what might be called an adequate rather than a distinguished colorist. The composition in this work, too, is of a somewhat pedestrian order. Yet, to observe its easy naturalness, to realize the manner in which the painter takes us into the intimacy of the scene, is to draw nearer to the secret of his art. It was the secret of a man who quite literally took nature for his province, who dedicated himself to nothing so much as to the truth.

I suppose the reason why Hogarth every once in so often stirs my imagination is that his genius so strongly supports a fundamental conviction of mine. This conviction is that your great artist is not a demigod but a mortal. I know that he can soar prodigiously on the wings of imagination. I rejoice to watch him dipping his brush in earthquake and eclipse. But I know all the time that he is really a human creature, dealing with human things for the delight of the people of earth, and I love the masters like Rembrandt and Velasquez who fortify this contention. Hogarth is of their company, a fact

which is often forgotten. It is obscured more often than not through misunderstanding. People are obsessed by the purely æsthetic and decorative conception of a work of art. They balk at the picture which embodies an idea, even going so far as to argue that in the nature of things such a picture cannot be well painted. The other day the *London Studio* published in its series of "Masters of Painting" a capital sheaf of color reproductions from Hogarth's works. There is a charming introduction by Mr. Herbert B. Grimsditch, whose heart is in the right place, and he made a delectable comment on this absurd attitude. A worthy subject for Mr. Max Beerbohm, he says, would be: "An exponent of the New Criticism standing before the 'Marriage à-la-Mode,' trying not to notice the story." In the work of Hogarth you rarely can get away from the story, but it happens to be greatly painted.

He was born in London in 1697, the son of a country schoolmaster who had come up to the metropolis in the hope of bettering his condition. The elder Hogarth was, to some extent, a writing man but not a very successful one if the artist is to be believed. "My father's pen," he wrote, "like that of many other authors, did not enable him to do more than put me in a way of shifting for myself. As I had naturally a good eye and a fondness for drawing, *shows* of all sorts gave me uncommon pleasure when an infant; and mimickry, common to all chil-

dren, was remarkable in me. An early access to a neighboring painter drew my attention from play; and I was, at every possible opportunity, employed in making drawings. I picked up an acquaintance of the same turn, and soon learnt to draw the alphabet with great correctness. My exercises, when at school, were more remarkable for the ornaments which adorned them than for the exercise itself. In the former I soon found that blockheads with better memories could much surpass me; but for the latter, I was particularly distinguished." In his youth he got himself apprenticed to a "silver-plate engraver," and he has left it on record that at twenty his utmost ambition was to work on copper. He cultivated his draughtsmanship on a rather dubious hypothesis, making more of memory than of the discipline involved in work direct from the model. It was inborn instinct more than anything else that pulled him through. But the story of his formative period is extremely difficult to disentangle.

As a young man he went to the academy of Sir James Thornhill, but the student of his technique gathers nothing from that association. The only fact relating to it that is of any consequence is one for the biographer, the fact that Hogarth ran away with Sir James's only daughter, Jane. It may be noted in passing that though the match was clandestine it was altogether happy and the father was soon reconciled. When Hogarth painted his famous series

illustrating "A Harlot's Progress," his wife and her mother placed some of the pictures in the Thornhill dining-room. Sir James looked at them and presently was told the artist's name. "Very well," said Sir James, "the man who can furnish representations like these can also maintain a wife without a portion," and the obdurate parent's hard heart was speedily softened. If solvency was all that concerned him he may well have relented, for Hogarth rallied 1,200 subscribers to the Progress at a guinea each. But I prefer to believe that Thornhill, despite the mediocrity of his own achievement, was still enough of an artist to sense the fact that his daughter had married a man of genius.

What a portent he was! To realize this you have only to glance at the state of English art at the time of his rise and during the preceding generation. The beautifully austere tradition of Holbein's epoch had long since disappeared, and the revival of Van Dyck's influence awaited the apparition of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and their circle. Prior to the advent of Hogarth the high lights in British painting were supplied by such mannered luminaries as Lely and Kneller. There was nothing in what they did even remotely to foreshadow Hogarth, and though, as I have said, we know little about his pupilage, we know also that he had no contemporary to start him upon his career. No; after the manner of genius he just happened, out of the blue, and the astounding thing

is that he was not himself conscious of launching forth as a *painter* in our modern sense, but sought to make his mark rather on what your latter-day critic would call "literary" grounds. He decided not to go in for portrait-painting, which he thought too laborious, and besides it wasn't sufficiently profitable to pay expenses! In some scattered sentences he has left us the tale of his decision and his purpose:

I therefore turned my thoughts to a still more novel mode, viz., painting and engraving modern moral subjects, a field not broken up in any country and any age. . . . I wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage; and farther hope, that they will be tried by the same test, and criticized by the same criterion. Let it be observed, that I mean to speak only of those scenes where the human species are actors and these, I think, have not often been delineated in a way of which they are worthy and capable. In these compositions those subjects that will both entertain and improve the mind bid fair to be of the greatest public utility and must, therefore, be entitled to rank in the highest class. . . . I have endeavored to treat my subject as a dramatic writer; my picture is my stage, and men and women my players, who by means of certain actions and gestures are to exhibit a *dumb show*. . . . This I found was most likely to answer my purpose, provided I could strike the passions, and by small sums from many, by the sale of prints which I could engrave from my own pictures, thus secure my property to myself.

It was a great emprise, and there was nothing more vitalizing about it than the originality of the force from which it sprang. When Austin Dobson wrote his invaluable memoir of Hogarth, he spoke of being in the dark in respect to the special train of suggestion that promoted the evolution of the artist's scheme. He wanted an origin for "A Harlot's Progress." There must have been some proximate cause "that prompted this picture-chronicle of hapless Mary Hackabout." Why look further for it than in Hogarth's creative inspiration? The central idea he spun out of his own entrails, and the stuff for its development lay all about him in the highly colored fabric of British life. That life in the eighteenth century was endued with a powerful and frequently coarse animal vigor. It was lived with a zest if with nothing else. Drink, gambling, and libertinism were rampant, expending the emotions which were not exhausted by the violent sports of the field. To crown all this the courtly world knew how to adjust its pace to the elegant measure manifested in that pageant which you get from Sir Joshua and the rest. An artificial grace carried off the excesses of an essentially turbulent social movement. Georgian England made up in manners what it lacked in the sterner virtues, but the disparity between outward demeanor and inner corruption was not to be covered up by fashionable fustian, and the era cried aloud for the ministrations of the moralist. Hogarth filled the rôle to perfection.

His personality is not that of the impassioned philosopher. Dobson portrays him as "a sturdy, outspoken, honest, obstinate, pugnacious little man," and thus visualized he does not loom exactly as a scourge for mankind. Nevertheless, there is in him something of the fierce and steady glow of righteous indignation. He made his two "Progresses," Mary Hackabout's and the Rake's, he made his "Marriage à-la-Mode" and his divers other admonitory designs, and he made them, there can be no doubt, out of a high cerebral fermentation, a burning fervor, and a sublime sincerity. Swift's tribute to him is well to remember, for Swift, of all men, was qualified to appreciate him:

> "How I want thee, humerous Hogarth!
> Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art.
> Were but you and I acquainted
> Every monster should be painted;
> You should try your graving tools
> On this odious group of fools;
> Draw the beasts as I describe them;
> From their features as I gibe them;
> Draw them like, for I assure ye
> You will need no *car'catura;*
> Draw them so that we may trace
> All the soul in every face."

So Hogarth did draw them, with "the soul in every face." The world knows it pretty well. The paintings are lodged in museums and private collec-

tions, but the prints have gone everywhere, and so every one is familiar with Hogarth's biting veracity, his power in dramatizing a theme, and his curious aptitude in the invention of telling details. There is no doubt that as a moralist Hogarth came into his fame long ago. Yet the very popularity of his prints and the critical error to which I have referred have tended to withdraw attention from his merit as a pure painter.

It was strangely dependent upon his fidelity to the *milieu* to which he belonged, the *milieu* of the observer, the realist. In the earlier part of his life he seems to have realized this. He would inveigh against the old masters, regarding emulation of them as a bit of hypocritical sophistication. Later, from time to time, he deviated into something like emulation of them himself. He liked to play with ideas of art as well as with ideas of life, and paused long enough in his work to write an "Analysis of Beauty." But that celebrated *opusculum* is far from proving that he was at home in æsthetic theory, and when he took his instruments and deliberately sought to essay "the grand style," he only landed in disaster. Sir Joshua's polite disparagement in the fourteenth of his Discourses, embodied in a passage otherwise generously appreciative, is the last word on that sad subject. The living world for Hogarth, always; in his pictures he gave it the tang of nature and the beauty. There is a painting of his at Dulwich, "A

Fishing Party," in which a richly dressed lady, with her child and its nurse, is placed beside a stream against a background of trees. It is just such a sylvan pastoral as Gainsborough was later to make magical. Hogarth does not have magic in this picture, but he has the naturalistic basis for it, and there is solidity in his technique, as there is power. His color is full and robust. In his mere painted surface he has weight and depth. There he has also that precious quality beloved by the connoisseur which flows from the brush of the instinctive technician. He has touch. He has the indescribable beauty of workmanship which is a beauty by itself. I well remember savoring it in passages more, perhaps, than in the ensembles of "The Rake's Progress" at the Soane, but when I think of a full-rounded Hogarth, a complete Hogarth, a Hogarth who could have been own brother to a Hals or a Manet, I think of the bewitching "Shrimp Girl" in the National Gallery. There's only one word for it—it is luscious. This canvas alone is enough to designate Hogarth a painter's painter. Portraying a rosy-cheeked Billingsgate type, he sees her youth with a kindling eye and flings it into his picture with ineffable spontaneity and sureness. The stroke is as swinging as it is firm. There is nothing too much. Roughly indicating the essentials, Hogarth proceeds at seemingly headlong pace and leaves the study a little marvel of light, flowing breadth. And it was the painter of this mas-

terpiece who nearly escaped recognition because he had a weakness for the subject picture!

Well, he prospered exceedingly, it is pleasant to know. He had good friends in that wonderful world of eighteenth-century London. Garrick, whose portrait he painted, was one of them. "He is a great and original Genius," wrote the actor. "I love him as a Man, and reverence him as an Artist." He was indeed human, a friendly, lovable type, and not the less lovable because he could show on occasion a militant and even mischievous disposition. Dobson reproduces from Mrs. Piozzi a charming anecdote concerning a deformed nobleman who went to Hogarth for his portrait expecting flattery and declined the painting when it turned out to be ruthlessly faithful. Whereupon he received this pointed letter: "Mr. Hogarth's dutiful respects to Lord ——. Finding that he does not mean to have the picture which was drawn for him, is informed again of Mr. Hogarth's necessity for the money. If, therefore, his Lordship does not send for it in three days, it will be disposed of, with the addition of a tail and some other little appendages, to Mr. Hare, the famous wildbeast man; Mr. Hogarth having given that gentleman a conditional promise of it for an exhibition-picture on his Lordship's refusal." His Lordship sent for the picture. He destroyed it—but he paid the bill.

XXI

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

XXI

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One of the things that made Stanford White a delight to his friends was the varied play of his enthusiasm for works of beauty. You never knew what was going to excite him next. All that you could be sure of was that, whether building or book, picture or musical composition, it would be vitally interesting. Thinking of Pre-Raphaelitism, my mind goes back to a typical discovery of the architect's, years ago. He had got hold of the Moxon "Tennyson," the famous edition of 1857 for which some of the leading artists of the day made illustrations, and of course he battened on the best thing in the book, Holman Hunt's design for these lines:

> She left the web, she left the loom,
> She made three paces thro' the room,
> She saw the water-lily bloom,
> She saw the helmet and the plume,
> She look'd down to a Camelot.
> Out flew the web and floated wide;
> The mirror crack'd from side to side;
> "The curse is coming upon me," cried
> The Lady of Shalott.

Hunt enmeshed the stately figure in linear swirls, a triumph of romantic grace—and of good drawing.

White had the little woodcut enlarged in a photograph to a height of three or four feet, on white paper, and then proceeded to touch it up with pastel. The result took my breath away. It was one of the loveliest pictures I had ever seen. A few years later, walking down a London street, I was attracted by a placard in an art-dealer's window, announcing that Holman Hunt's *painting* of "The Lady of Shalott" might be seen within. I paid my shilling and looked upon the tall canvas he had based, after I do not know how many years, upon the drawing of 1857. Speaking quite temperately, and with due remembrance of this artist's distinction, I must say that I found his newer "Lady of Shalott" one of the *un*loveliest pictures I had ever seen. The huge scale had robbed the subject of a good deal of its light, fairy-like charm, and, quite apart from that, the drawing had lost elasticity and the harsh, glaring color was merely repellent. The designer had survived, but his inadequacy as a painter had come nigh to ruining a beautiful conception.

I set forth these two incidents as forming, together, a parable, one indicative of the strength and weakness of the whole Pre-Raphaelite school. They were all like that—Hunt, Madox Brown, Rossetti, Burne-Jones. They were fertile, interesting designers and capable draughtsmen. None of them was an absolute master of the art of painting. It is not altogether fanciful to say that their fame would be

well served if their works were to be made known exclusively in photographs, in such grayish prints, say, as the English Hollyer made so popular. In monochrome you think only of their ideas. Questions of painted surface disappear. Those return in the most disconcerting manner when you see the originals. They, the Pre-Raphaelites, knew all about the pleasures of the imagination. The joys of sheer brushwork and the loving manipulation of pigment for its own sake they ignored, if they were not, indeed, entirely unaware of them. In Millais alone were there any stirrings of the modern feeling for technique as such, and the reader may have observed that I did not name him with the others just cited, though he was in at the birth of the Pre-Raphaelite hypothesis and at first seemed likely to prove one of its most steadfast adherents. As a matter of fact, he soon left the group, being, by a happy stroke, very much concerned with painting as painting, a clever man of his hands. Yet Millais, as is well known, was but dubiously rewarded for his defection, disclosing a marked inferiority to his old comrades in the creative stuff of art and building up much of his subsequent prestige on Academic banality.

It all makes an intensely exciting problem, this conflict of the English Pre-Raphaelites between ideas and execution. In a short-sighted view of the matter that painter is badly handicapped who dips his brush, as they did, in the tints of a "literary"

subject. That is the not unfamiliar opinion of the latter-day type who balks at anything human or dramatic. Nothing could be wider of the mark. The good painter, by which I mean simply the man who knows his trade, can handle any subject, no matter how spiritually or dramatically it may appeal to mankind. Rembrandt drew upon the Scriptures. Rubens dealt as freely with mythology as with realistic episodes. Velasquez turned historian when he painted "The Surrender of Breda." In modern times Delacroix saturated his art in the genius of a Dante or a Shakespeare, and, long after him, the Belgian Alfred Stevens not infrequently justified himself, through consummate technique, in the commemoration of mawkish sentimentality. No, there is nothing in the least fearsome about the "literary" bogie. It can scare only the unthoughtful. Moreover, the literary motive, or, as I would prefer to put it, imaginative inspiration, has a wonderful way of sometimes justifying an artist regardless of his imperfect technique. Arnold Boecklin was not a great painter, but a certain glamour still hangs about his strange compositions. Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon were better poets than they were painters. As much may be said for our own Albert P. Ryder. The man of ideas always manages, somehow, to carry conviction.

It is so with Rossetti. I was struck by the potency of his name in 1928, a year of potent anniversaries.

These were chiefly of a high artistic significance. Germany remembered, on April 6, that Albrecht Dürer, a great draughtsman, had died four hundred years before. On April 16 Spain marked the centenary of the death of a great painter, Goya. The French paid tribute on July 15 to a great sculptor, Houdon, dead a hundred years on that date. Was it a great artist that England recalled on May 12, the centenary of Rossetti's birth? Hardly. But an artist nevertheless who brought things of beauty into the world and whose place, of its kind, remains secure. In my mind's eye I can see in the National Gallery, as I first saw it long ago, his "Ecce Ancilla Domini." Technically it left no very deep impression, but as the embodiment of an idea this picture, painted when Rossetti was hardly more than a youth, confidently took its place in an extraordinarily exacting environment. It preserved the finer spirit of an older day. There hung about it the atmosphere of a noble historic tradition; it was unmistakably the work of a lofty spirit. Even at that early age a high-erected purpose was in the painter's blood, and it ran constructively through his life's work.

His parentage and upbringing had something to do with it. The expatriated Italian, Gabriele Rossetti, his father, was a professor in King's College, a devoted student of Dante, and this scholar's wife was a woman of kindred tastes. In their household all the elements were favorable to poetic and æsthetic

activity. How else could the delicate genius of Christina Rossetti have developed? It seems the most natural thing in the world that Dante Gabriel should have been in the hands of a drawing-teacher by the time he was fourteen, and that despite his addiction to the writing of poetry he was almost at once—with every circumstance of family good-will—clearly headed for the career of a painter. On the other hand, why did he never really fit himself for that career? He sought and obtained admission to the antique class at the Royal Academy, but Mr. Marillier, the best historian of his purely artistic development, says bluntly that "he proved a failure" there, and as candidly admits that "he wanted to paint before he could properly draw." When he turned from the academic training that he found unsympathetic and persuaded Madox Brown to take him into his studio he still rebelled against what he evidently considered soulless drudgery. His master set him a problem in still life—it is said the painting of a row of pickle-jars—and forthwith Rossetti edged off into the company of Holman Hunt. That affair of the pickle-jars calls up an attractive "might-have-been." The discipline might have proved his salvation. But I don't think his aversion from the mint and cummin of training was alone responsible for his weakness in technique.

He suffered to a certain extent from the fact that that subject was not precisely in the air in the Lon-

don of his formative period. It hadn't then been any too widely liberated even in Paris, the great experimental laboratory of modern art, the processes of change inaugurated by the men of 1830 making but slow headway against the prevailing tide. Rossetti and Manet were contemporaries, but only according to dates in the calendar. I do not know that the Englishman ever had any contact with the works of his French colleague or that he ever had the smallest interest in the sort of direct painting in which Manet carried on the tradition of Velasquez and Goya. For a clinching exposition of his detachment from the mysteries of mere handling go to the Tate—where it now is—and observe the differences between the whites—good as they are—in the "Ecce Ancilla Domini" and those in, say, the "Little White Girl" of Whistler, another contemporary, and, by the way, ultimately a friend. One more "might-have-been." If he had known Whistler earlier, and had had him for an oracle instead of Ruskin, he might have been moved to closer traffic with tonal issues. But enough of vain regrets. What we need rather to dwell upon is his creative passion, his mastery in the evocation of enchanting figures, his rich contribution to the world's store of pictorial romance.

You get a good clew to the pure gold at the core of his work in a saying of Hunt's about Rossetti in the days when they were all young together and absorbed in the interests of the Pre-Raphaelite Brother-

hood. Rossetti, he says, "with his spirit alike subtle and fiery, was essentially a proselytizer, sometimes to an almost absurd degree, but possessed, alike in his poetry and painting, with *an appreciation of beauty of the most intense quality.*" The italics are mine. They are to stress the burning life that glows in Rossetti's art, counterbalancing every weakness of turgid painting, too fervid color, insensitive tone, or nerveless drawing. What he lacks in technique he makes up in vision. All the Pre-Raphaelites were dedicated to the interpretation of great subjects in terms of primitive simplicity and truth, but none of them could match him in opulence of poetic feeling and beauty. Where the charm of Burne-Jones, for example, is exquisite, and connotes a kind of emotional placidity, that of Rossetti is boldly impassioned, sumptuous, and implies power. I say this for all that Rossetti had tenderness and in pictures like his famous "Beata Beatrix" could plumb far depths of elegiac sentiment. The broad drift of his outpourings, however, denotes a genius of ebullient energy, full-textured, as dense, warm, and shadowy as some mediæval tapestry. He was fortunate in his models, in having beautiful friends like Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Stillman to sit for him, but it is a mistake to ascribe to their noble presences a preponderant share in the ample, Venetian gorgeousness of his pictures. That sprang primarily from his instinctive Italianate largeness of imagination. He is a kind of

Palma turned meditative and even, perhaps, a little morbid; a delineator of sensuous beauty whose images are freighted with the same half-earthy, half-mystical moods he could put so subtly into verse. In him, to be sure, the painter and the poet were one and an apparition that he arrests upon canvas, endowed with the curving lips, the deep brows, and the massy hair of sorcery, take hold of the imagination with the intoxicating lure of a romantic dramatist's incantation.

There were traces of earthiness in him, as I have said. He had an artist's appreciation of such regal bodily beauty as you see in his "Lady Lilith," a liking for luxurious stuffs and ornate accessories. But all this was governed by a habit of mind incapable of grossness. I know of nothing about him more characteristic than the repugnance which Rubens roused in him on his first visit to the Louvre, made with Holman Hunt early in life. He burst out into verse denunciatory of nudes made "uncouth, with stagnant grouts of paint." The nude, as it happens, is almost imperceptible in his *œuvre*. His preoccupation was with other things, with the gravely garmented "Proserpine," with the richly bedight lady of "The Loving Cup," with plaintive "Mariana," with "Veronica Veronese" in her flowing velvet, and, above all, with the melancholy shade of Dante. From his youth up he lived as it were under the constant influence of the poet. The elaborate composition,

"Dante's Dream," which is perhaps the most important of his pictures, is not by any means the sole testimony to his ardor for the "Divine Comedy." Over and over again Dante gave him a subject, and even when he found one elsewhere he carried over into his treatment of it an emotion of sad Dantesque revery, sad sometimes to the point of gloom.

He was a very human creature. It has been said of him that, poet and idealist as he was, he nevertheless "had business qualities of a high order and the eye of a trained financier for anything that had money in it." A practical trait comes out in the fact that a good part of his life was spent in the painting of replicas of pictures of his that had found favor. Hard-headed industry waited on his poetic fervor. He knew how to drive a bargain. He was human also in his moodiness, a natural, quick-tempered, gusty individual. A sterling sincerity underlay his exotic picturesqueness, and he must have had some lovable ingredients in his nature, to judge from the loyal friendships that broke in upon his more or less cloistered existence. He struggled with ill health in his later years. Insomnia drove him to chloral and in the upshot that proved a more than doubtful resource. He seems a sorrowful, broken, very mortal type when death comes for him in 1882, untimely, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. But there is nothing so linked with immortal things as is the breath of the poet. Rossetti had it. It exhales from his paint-

ings as from his verse. Though he was not a great artist in the technical sense, his art endures.

I do not know why it has not been more appreciated by American collectors. One or two of them have responded to its appeal. Mr. Samuel Bancroft, of Wilmington, was early in the field, and time has not dimmed my memory of the exhibition at the Century Club in which he once assembled his Pre-Raphaelite treasures. Rossetti figures conspicuously also in the collection of Mr. Grenville Winthrop, in New York. But I know of no other connoisseurs here who have given as much attention to the subject. Possibly the reason is to be found in the spread in the United States of that very cult for technical brilliance to which, as I have shown, Rossetti was disinclined to pay tribute. An American generation predisposed by circumstances to foster a taste for a Manet or a Sargent could hardly be expected to turn very readily toward a painter like Rossetti. It has read him willingly enough, but it has not looked at him much. Sooner or later, I believe, the omission will be repaired. For to look at him in a friendly spirit is presently to be drawn to him as by a spell.

XXII

HOUDON

XXII

HOUDON

When in 1784 the legislators of Virginia passed a resolution that "the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington," the enterprise was launched in a spirit peculiarly favorable to artistic success. "The intention of the Assembly," wrote Governor Harrison to Thomas Jefferson, then newly established as our Minister to France, "is that the statue should be the work of the most masterly hand." Himself a man of taste, and quickly sensitive to the judgment of the people about him, Jefferson replied: "There could be no question raised as to the Sculptor who should be employed; the reputation of Mons. Houdon, of this city, being unrivalled in Europe." In a letter to Washington he is, if anything, more emphatic, saying: "I find that a Monsieur Houdon, of this place, possesses the reputation of being the first statuary in the world." Benjamin Franklin was at Jefferson's elbow during the ensuing negotiations, and in the following year the old sage brought Houdon with him to America. In the upshot we gained the familiar bust and that stately full length which makes the capitol at Richmond a place of pilgrimage. The episode wakes, of course, lofty trains of thought, but

for the moment I must pause upon a matter pointing to just the mutations of time. "The first statuary in the world," in the eighteenth century, received $5,000 for the Richmond marble. Consider, on the other hand, the fortunes of the little bust he made of his daughter Sabine. When the Doucet collection was dispersed at Paris in 1912 this fetched $90,000. At the Gary sale in New York, on April 22, 1928, it was sold for $245,000. Auction prices are no doubt sordid things, but in this case they indicate rather vividly the growth of the cult for Houdon.

It is a cult around which one would expect to find that an extensive literature had gathered, yet the fame of Houdon, so wide-spread even while he lived, has received but belated recognition at the hands of the biographical fraternity. Minor contributions to the subject were made by Montaiglon and Duplessis, and then by Délerot and Legrelle, in the 50's, but no set, formal memoir of the artist was available until two Americans, the late Charles Henry Hart and his friend Edward Biddle, wrote one and printed it in a limited edition at Philadelphia in 1911. Since then, in 1918, the sculptor, M. Georges Giacometti, has brought out a work valuable for its critical acumen, its careful chronological indications, and its *répertoires*. His three little volumes are but indifferently printed, resembling the French novel of Browning's phrase, "on dull grey paper, in blunt type," but a recent prospectus promises a new edition in

sumptuous form with quantities of plates. This was projected with a view to the commemoration of the centenary of Houdon's death, which occurred on July 15, 1828.

He was born on March 20, 1741, in the full tide of an artistic movement which he was destined to share and at the same time to re-energize with a force essentially his own. He was of obscure origin. Giacometti notes that Houdon *père* was employed as *valet de chambre* by M. de Lamotte in his house in the Rue d'Anjou at Versailles. While the valet's son was still a child M. de Lamotte took his staff up to Paris, and there Jacques Houdon appears to have served him as concierge. He continued in that rôle when, on his patron's death, the establishment was taken over for L'Ecole des Elèves Protégés, the school created for the fuller training of winners of the Prix de Rome. Nothing better could have happened to the future master. From his earliest years he breathed the airs of the studio, and seems to have gravitated to his vocation by an irresistible instinct. In a letter written long afterward, in 1794, to his friend Citoyen Bachelier, he describes himself, without using the phrase, as a kind of infant prodigy. Messrs. Hart and Biddle cite a passage from Raoul Rochette, the sculptor's son-in-law, which piquantly suggests the nature of his beginnings: "He tiptoes into the classroom, and is happy if he can snatch a few pieces of moist clay in order to imitate the work

of the students. The attention of the professors, especially of Pigalle, was attracted to the zeal and talent which his attempts showed, and he considered it worth while to give advice and encouragement to the boy, hardly more than ten or twelve years old at that time." He was only fifteen when a silver medal came his way, and by the time he was twenty he had won the Prix de Rome, though he did not actually go to Italy until 1764, three years later. His great gifts were by this time under extraordinary control, to judge from one early manifestation of them, the huge "San Bruno" which he was commissioned to execute for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome. One of the few anecdotes that we have of Houdon relates to this monument. "He would speak," said Pope Clement, when he saw it, "were it not that the rules of his order enjoin silence." The papal *mot* drove straight at the core of Houdon's genius, his power of vitalizing his sculptures with searching poignancy.

It had been the genius of French sculpture from the days of the Gothic Primitives, whose great achievement was the endowment of their work for the cathedrals with an intense spiritual and emotional life. It was the genius of Pigalle, about whose "Mercury Tying His Sandal" (to be seen here in terra-cotta, in the Altman collection at the Metropolitan Museum) there is nothing more impressive than its eager nervous force. But I have spoken of

Houdon's foreordained individuality. It is prefigured if not clearly proclaimed in the "San Bruno." That is a study in pure simplicity, its almost bare austerity governed to a certain extent, no doubt, by the monkish robe, with its few folds, but the important thing to observe is that this simplicity is organic, an element in Houdon's blood. He took to Rome, developed there, and exercised all his life long a passion for the direct expression of fact as distinguished from that predilection for the conventional decorative motive which is so characteristic of eighteenth-century French art. He dips into no artifice. He has no mannerisms. His entire work is based upon what Giacometti happily designates *cet immuable principe, tout pour la vérité et par la vérité.* Being a Frenchman of his time, true, as I have said, to the drift of the eighteenth century, he remained a classicist, even an academician. But he had the inspiration to strike a perfect balance between classical simplicity and a thoroughly modern realism. He gave the academic hypothesis an ebullient soul.

With the power to do this, he returned to France and assumed at once a commanding rôle. Admitted to the Academy, a prominent and sometimes astonishingly copious exhibitor at the Salon, finding clients in the great world of European society and in that of the leading intellectual figures of the epoch, he proceeded to win golden laurels through the beauty of his imaginative designs and, even more, through the

distinction of his portrait busts. The Empress Catherine was one of his patrons. Several German princes employed him. At home he rode the crest of the wave. He was not yet forty when he produced his masterpiece, the seated statue of Voltaire, which is the proudest possession of the Théâtre Français. In 1785 he made his famous visit to America, which I have already signalized. The Virginians had thought that they might sufficiently aid his development of the statue of Washington if they sent him a full-length painting of the general by Peale. But Houdon would have none of a secondary impression. He made the voyage with Franklin, and was rewarded soon after his arrival by these words from Washington:

By a letter, which I have lately had the honor to receive from Dr. Franklin, at Philadelphia, I am informed by your arrival at that place. Many letters from very respectable characters in France, as well as the Doctor's, inform me of the occasion, for which, though the cause is not of my seeking, I feel the most agreeable and grateful sensations. I wish the object of your mission had been more worthy of the masterly genius of the first statuary in Europe; for thus you are represented to me. It will give me pleasure, Sir, to welcome you to the seat of my retirement.

To what ardor he must have been stirred by this noble greeting! He stayed at Mount Vernon for two

weeks, modelled a bust of Washington, cast a life-mask of the great man, and went back to France amply equipped to carry out the design that is at Richmond. Life flowed on thenceforth industriously, peacefully, and prosperously until the Revolution. Then he barely escaped the sinister attentions of the Committee of Public Safety by turning an old "Saint Scholastica" of his into an image of "Philosophy," a bit of disarming diplomacy for which he is said to have been indebted to suggestions made by both his wife and the Conventionnel Barère. He lived on in circumstances which if not as brilliant as those he had known under the old régime were at all events not undistinguished. Napoleon, whose bust by him is at Dijon, made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. He was one of the definitively recognized heroes of French art when he died, and the Salle Houdon in the Louvre heads a considerable list of the official testimonies that have been paid to his name and fame.

It is the sheer power of his art that has defined his rank. There is also another element in his renown to which it is fitting to refer as we approach the strictly æsthetic value of his work. He was the incomparable interpreter of the great notabilities of his generation. I wish I could reproduce intact Giacometti's roster of the people he portrayed. Royal and noble figures loom large, but statesmen are as numerous, and he sculptured a veritable pell-mell of

the men of mind it was his privilege to face. If he could model a "Louis XVI" and a "Catherine," a "Napoleon" and a "Washington," a "Mirabeau" and a "Franklin," he could model also a "Gluck" and a "Buffon," a "Voltaire," a "Diderot" and a "Rousseau," a "Lavoisier" and a "Robert Fulton," a "Sophie Arnould," a "Madame Du Barry," and, even, a "Cagliostro," which Lady Dilke, who saw it at Bagatelle, describes as "amazing." It is all amazing, this densely populated cosmos of Houdon's. He was one of the most prolific artists who have ever lived, and there is an even persuasiveness about the countless portraits he made that in its cumulative effect is curiously impressive. It is as though he unveiled the personnel of a period. The *œuvre* of no master of the Italian Renaissance is richer than his in variety and virility. His range is by itself one of the salient phenomena in the history of art. No nuance of character baffles him. Set side by side the serene dignity of the "Washington" and the dynamic, *malin* note of the "Voltaire." Recall, after the antique grace of the "Napoleon," the relentless prose of "Le Bailli de Suffren," the elevation of the "Diderot," and the fairly intimate realism of the pockmarked "Gluck." In each case, and in scores of others, he seems to me—like Velasquez in painted portraiture —to penetrate to the heart of his sitter and yet to maintain about his work a consummately cool objectivity. French sculpture before him was some-

Baroness De La Houze

FROM THE SCULPTURE BY HOUDON IN THE HUNTINGTON COLLECTION AT PASADENA

times disposed to take a rhetorical line. Coysevox, for example, back in the seventeenth century, would bring off a bust with a fairly melodramatic flourish, giving to a billowing drapery its fullest and most *baroque* value. Houdon is steadily more classical in temperament, purer in style, more restrained, more delicate, and, by the same token, more piercing.

His delicacy tells above all things in his portraits of women and children and in his poetic conceptions, like the great marble "Diana" at The Hermitage, known also in bronze and terra-cotta, and like "L'Hiver" at Montpellier. These statues of his are lovely things, illuminating evocations of imaginative ideas, equally remarkable as compositions and as harmonies in the development of fine, flowing line. Houdon could make a contour of an extraordinarily limpid, living thing. The blind enthusiasts who hail Rodin as the inventor of a new magic in the modelling of the nude would do well to look at Houdon's "Diana" and see to what degree of subtle felicity, and especially of linear distinction, the art had been carried by the earlier master a hundred years before. And yet, I confess, when I am thinking of Houdon the supreme technician, modelling with divination and an ineffable touch forms of lightness, grace, and elegance, I think quite as much of his portraits as I do of the glorious "Diana." I think of the superb "Madame de Sérilly" in the Louvre and of the no less bewitching "Baroness de la Houze" in the Hunting-

ton collection out at Pasadena. I think of the "Mdlle. Brongniart" in the Louvre or the "Sabine Houdon," either in the marble which now belongs to Mrs. Harkness or in the terra-cotta owned by Mrs. Duke. The enchantment of childhood could not be mirrored with a tenderer sympathy, with a lighter, more caressing stroke, or with a more convincing clairvoyance than in these miraculous little busts. And what transcends their scale, what gives a fairly splendid immortality to the fragile motives they celebrate, is Houdon's note of style, the sign of his genius, and the stamp of his authority as a technician.

For he was a great craftsman, besides being a great artist. He made it his boast that he knew his *métier*. In the letter to Bachelier upon which I have previously drawn he speaks of *deux études* to which he has given his entire life, *l'anatomie et la fonte des statues*—anatomy and the art of casting. His craft contained for him no insoluble problems. He had mastered them all, in all the mediums, and whether in marble, bronze, terra-cotta, or plaster his work compels admiration by, among other things, its easy finish, its effortless rightness. No one could be more modest than he was. When some one bracketed his "Diana" with the "Apollo" of the Vatican he promptly demurred, saying: "My 'Diana' is not in this class." Nevertheless, he attained to something like perfection in his mastery, the perfection of an immeasurably accomplished workman. Add to that his

truth, his feeling for character, his saturation in the tincture of style, and the fire of genius that was in him, and you have the explanation of why Jefferson found him enjoying "the reputation of being the first statuary in the world." He was surely that, in his time. There are some shining names in the French sculpture of the eighteenth century—Bouchardon, Pigalle, Lemoine, Falconet, Caffieri, Pajou, and Clodion. But Houdon remains, in a certain central power and a certain consequent richness of appeal, the greatest of them all.

XXIII

CARPEAUX

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CARPEAUX

In the 60's Carpeaux's famous group of "La Danse" was erected against the façade of the Paris Opera. Some scandalized vandal promptly broke a bottle of ink upon it, and this was only one incident in a fusillade of protest. Yet within a comparatively few years of the sculptor's death there was established in the Louvre a "Salle Carpeaux." The swift transition from obloquy to *la gloire* is characteristic of the career of this Frenchman. Its lights and its shadows are very sharply contrasted. He would excite violent opposition and then Fortune would smile upon him. There is something typical in the experience of the Goncourts where he is involved. Their first impression of him was unfavorable, as an entry in the *Journal* for 1865 clearly indicates, but a later foot-note records that they came to consider him the greatest French artist of the nineteenth century. That is in its turn perhaps too fervid a judgment, but Carpeaux's eminence in plastic art nevertheless remains indisputable, and there was bound to be impressive recognition of it by his countrymen in 1927 when his centenary was celebrated. The French always make much of such occasions. There are official observances, the periodical press is full of eulogy, and in every way a nation that is dedicated to

the arts is quick to honor a notable artist. Carpeaux's fame, indeed, extends well beyond his native land, and though it has been a little obscured by that of Rodin, I need make no apology for recalling it.

Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux was born at Valenciennes, Watteau's town, on May 11, 1827. M. Mabille de Poncheville, in his "Carpeaux Inconnu," has piously assembled all the available souvenirs of the artist's infancy and youth in a *milieu* which had possibly less influence upon his subject than the zealous biographer imagines. That is to say, I cannot perceive in Carpeaux's art anything precisely attributable to traits in the air at Valenciennes, unless possibly he caught there some faint reverberations of the genius of Watteau. But in ponderable matters there is no ignoring his alliance with his native place. His people there belonged to the industrial class. His father was a mason with certain aspirations, as is denoted by his willingness to have his son Charles turn violinist. But one artist in the family was enough, and Jean-Baptiste, whose fingers precociously itched to touch clay, was destined to get at it only after a good deal of discouragement. The Carpeauxs were very poor, and an artistic predilection was a luxury to be grudgingly indulged even if it were to be allowed at all. In so far as the indigent stone-mason was inclined to yield to the lad's wish, he preferred to see him an architect, that vocation, I suppose, holding out a little better prospect of material advantage.

La Danse

FROM THE GROUP AT THE PARIS OPERA BY CARPEAUX

It was in the direction of architecture that the young Carpeaux was allowed to make some study at Valenciennes.

In 1844, when he was still in his teens, the whole family went up to Paris seeking betterment, and though conditions there were still full of hardship, so that we read of him actually serving as a porter in the Halles, all obstacles were presently broken down, and we find him a pupil at "l'Ecole Royale," familiarly known as the little Ecole des Beaux Arts, presided over by one Belloc, a friend of Ingres. Drawing and mathematics were supposed to be the particular objects of his study, but he contrived to find some play for his plastic instincts, and even in this formative period he could produce modest decorative pieces for commercial purposes and thereby earn a few sous. Meanwhile the external benefits accruing from his tie with Valenciennes were slowly developing. Friendly souls there, hearing of his plight, interested themselves, and from time to time helpful sums were forthcoming. I wonder if the struggles of that difficult time were not responsible for the kindness which Carpeaux had in the days of his success for younger artists. Long after his own harsh pupilage he was walking in the Louvre one day when he found the boy Forain at work with his sketch-book. Promptly he took him under his patronage and gave him counsel. He knew how precious that had been to him in his own youth.

Friendships at home and in Paris brought a little more smoothness to his path, his father became more amenable, and presently affairs took a definitive turn toward his appointed goal, establishing him as a pupil of Rude. That master was more than kind to him. Not only did he teach and inspirit him, but when in the lad's pursuit of the Prix de Rome Rude's unfortunate relation to the authorities threatened to stand in Carpeaux's way, he amiably handed him over to Duret, as to a more auspicious mentor. He won the great prize in 1854, after repeated competitions. The victory ought ordinarily to have spelled subsequent ease and, indeed, Carpeaux was soon enough to taste the fruits of success; but all his life there was to be something tempestuous about him, and his early period is marked by episodes which are at least picturesque. The relief of "The Submission of Adb-el-Kader" which he sent to the Salon of 1853 was, of course, a direct tribute to the central figure in it, Napoleon III. When that potentate failed to explore the obscurity in which it was placed, Carpeaux was undaunted. With the relief under his arm he followed the Emperor upon an official progress in the provinces, and finally ran him to earth at Amiens, after the oddest misadventures. The pursuit even has its comic relief, for after Napoleon had given him an order to put the thing into permanent form, he shouted out after the great man, as he left, an adjuration to him not to forget his promise!

At Rome his fiery temperament had still further occasion to flare up. Schnetz, the Director at the Villa Medici, did not at all approve the sort of thing he was driving at in his "Ugolino," and he was involved in a good deal of friction. But his group won its way nevertheless, bringing appreciative notabilities to his studio. One of them, the Princess Borghese, fainted with emotion, and another, the powerful Nieuwerkerque, was thenceforth his stanch friend at the Tuileries. In due time, on his return to Paris, Carpeaux was, in fact, in high favor at the French Court. The Emperor smiled upon him, he entered the circle of the Princesse Mathilde, and, in short, his fortune was made, one important commission after another falling into his hands. At first blush it is a little difficult to visualize him as a denizen of that *monde* harboring so much of the literary and artistic talent of the Second Empire. Imagination balks at the idea of him in close confab with, say, Mérimée, the stonemason's son confronted by the self-contained man of the world. But we may be sure that he would hold his own, we may be sure from the closing clause in this passage from the Goncourts:

Ce Carpeaux: une nature de nervosité, d'emportement, d'exaltation, ce Carpeaux: une figure fruste, toujours en mouvement, avec des muscles changeant continuellement de place, et avec des yeux d'ouvrier en colère:—la fièvre du génie dans une enveloppe de marbrier.

He was a little man, so little that when he won the Prix de Rome and all Valenciennes turned out to greet him, he was almost lost sight of in the crowd, but there burned in him the fire of genius, and with it there operated a prodigious energy. It is significant that he sat with peculiar devotion at the feet of Michael Angelo and Rubens. Like them, he had creative *furia.* He filled hundreds of sketch-books with his notations. He was draughtsman and painter as well as sculptor. He is driven from beginning to end by an eager passion, and it is not surprising that at the end he is enveloped in shadow. He died untimely, at forty-eight. It was in 1875, when the Empire had faded and his prosperity had faded with it. When Prince Stirbey befriended his closing hours, he was the victim of a long and painful illness, embittered by the outcome of a tragic marriage. As he was about to say farewell to life he modelled a "Christ on the Cross" and then a bust of himself which his disciple, Bernard, carried out for him. A great sadness hovers about this portrait. There was always a note of tension, even of suffering, in Carpeaux's individuality. Yet if he remains one of the glories of modern sculpture, it is because he preserves in his work that *joie de vivre* which is one of the most characteristic elements in French art.

It sprang from his intimate contact with the things of the living world. The biographers report his passionate exclamation on his death-bed: "Ah! la vie! la

vie!" His ardor for "la vie" had ever been his guiding principle. He had imagination, but what he could see and touch moved him most. The Goncourts, to whose appreciation of him I cannot but return now and then, report some of his outpourings in the course of a railway journey. He said that for him beauty resided in Nature. He got far more out of the actual human body than he could get from Greek tradition. The same commentators found him the sole great artist in the Salon of 1872. They hailed him as the first to give in bronze or marble *la vie nerveuse de la chair.* He did not thus affirm himself in an absolutely definitive way all at once. The "Hector and Astyanax" with which he won the Prix de Rome is a group of obviously classical ancestry, just such an academic performance as might have been expected to please the jury at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Save for the technical proficiency it discloses, this stately composition has little in it to prefigure the ultimate Carpeaux. He adheres to a certain sober convention, too, in his first *envoi* from Rome, the gracious bust of a young girl called La Palombella. It might be said further that there is no great originality in his "Pêcheur à la Coquille" with its echo of Rude's "L'Enfant à la Tortue." But even then he was at a parting of the ways where his decision was destined to carry him to deeply potential achievements in French art.

He was the contemporary of men like Paul Dubois

and Falguière, but where they elected to develop their great gifts in harmony with the academic strain he swerved toward a more naturalistic practice. He did so when his friend Soumy put into his head Ugolino and his children for a subject. Tradition lingers in the style of this famous group. Something about its massy, antique character harks back to the "Laocoon." At the same time it palpitates with *la vie,* with the inner energy that the art of Carpeaux was never to lose. For my own part I do not find this a convincingly Dantesque image. It does not revive the magic of that passage which Matthew Arnold found so tremendous, so incomparable: "I wail not, so of stone grew I within;—*they* wailed." Carpeaux's Ugolino, biting his fingers, is no more the poet's agonist to me than is Rodin's creeping troglodyte. On the other hand, he is terribly and magnificently alive. When the sculptor had joined to this vitalizing power of his the faculty for blithe grace which makes him seem a throw-back to the eighteenth century, he had found his *métier.* The final and enchanting Carpeaux, growing rapidly to his full stature, is the Carpeaux of "La Ronde de Flore," "La Danse," the superb fountain group of the Observatoire, and the vivid busts that he made of certain habitués of the Court.

In these works he manifests all that was most personal and most brilliant in his artistic cosmos. He translates into marble all the quivering beauty and

tenderness of living flesh. His contours have linear distinction, and they are withal free, flowing, realistically expressive. He has movement, enkindling movement, and while he was never quite happy in collaboration with architectural motives, a certain decorative felicity nevertheless goes with his nominally capricious *élan*. "La Danse," for example, was designed with sublime indifference to the character of the building with which it was to be associated, and as I have already indicated, it suffered violent attacks. When it was bespattered with ink its defenders had a dolorous time removing the stains. Experiments finally developed a mixture of hypochloride of aluminum, of soda, and of lime, with the addition of aluminum hydroxide, which was successful. It was as hard to combat the malcontents who confined their criticisms to words. The moralists were out in full force. Chaste commentators denounced the sensuality of the group. High-souled Charles Garnier, the architect of the Opéra—who has left, by the way, a voluminous account of the whole embroglio—stood by Carpeaux through thick and thin. He knew a masterpiece when he saw one. It is a masterpiece in dramatic conception, in technical bravura, and—for all its want of solidarity with the building—in innate decorative elegance. Every visitor to Paris knows its charm. Those who know that best are those who know it not only through the stone but through the lovely plaster in the Louvre.

It is essential to know Carpeaux, of course, as his works exist in their appointed places. The fountain I have cited, for example, gains enormously as you see it under the sky through the long leafy vista in the gardens of the Luxembourg. He knew what he was about. When the open air was to be an element in his effect, he counted upon it. But there is a special pleasure, I think, to be got out of reflection in the Salle Carpeaux, where one may muse at large over his traits.

It is inspiring to follow him through his monumental designs and through those portrait busts in which he is equally vibrant with life and imposing with the dignity of style. His busts, indeed, are fascinating things. The Louvre has the "Princesse Mathilde," the "Dumas fils," the "Eugène Giraud," and others. The Musée de l'Opéra has the "Garnier." The flashing "Duchesse de Mouchy" is at Valenciennes. I love them all, but I go back to the Salle Carpeaux for the one that alone is enough to explain this sculptor's renown, the "Princesse Mathilde." Looking at that you feel that the *marbrier,* like his sitter, has "race." The style of the piece is aristocratic in its very grain. The composition is perfect, and there is something about the courtly distinction of the bust renewing the polished glamour which we associate with the best sculptures of Coysevox and the best paintings of Largillière. It is a faultless blending of style and *la vie.*

Carpeaux unites the old French tradition with the ebullience of modernity. He is a craftsman, and though Rodin might be said to equal him in that respect, he is perhaps greater than Rodin because he knew better than to allow his craftsmanship to lose itself in an excess of virtuosity. His sculpture, far more than Rodin's, is "of the centre," more organically sustained from within. He could wreak himself upon subtle modulations of surface, but a work of his is, above all things, the embodiment of an idea. When the contents of his old atelier on the Boulevard Exelmans went to the auction-room in 1913 (and the Copenhagen Museum paid 230,000 francs for the terra-cotta of "La Danse"), Victor Margueritte wrote the introductions to the two catalogues for the different sessions. In the course of his eulogy, he set down a charming passage, on which I may fitly close: *Carpeaux! Mystérieux modeleur du sourire humain, animateur prestigieux de la grâce, maître souverain des belles lignes, sous le frisson satiné de la peau!* He was all of these things and he was something more. He had the force and the originality of creative genius.

XXIV

A MONUMENT TO GILBERT STUART

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A MONUMENT TO GILBERT STUART

GILBERT STUART lies in an unmarked grave in the old Central Burying Ground on Boston Common. When, in 1897, the Paint and Clay Club wished to pay tribute to his shade, the members could do nothing more than affix a commemorative tablet to the railing of the cemetery, the exact location of the grave being lost beyond all possibility of identification. But on the centenary of his death, in 1928, he had his monument fashioned in the shape of "Gilbert Stuart: An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works," a book prepared by the late Lawrence Park. It is a truly imposing work in four stately volumes. The first volume opens with a brief biography of Park, accompanied by a portrait. Then comes a sketch of the life of Stuart by John Hill Morgan, to which a concise chronology is appended, and this is followed by a critical estimate of the painter by myself, a detail which I hope does not debar me from discussion of the book. The catalogue fills the rest of the first volume and all of the second, enumerating nine hundred and forty-eight paintings, exclusive of the one hundred and eleven entries given to Washington, and those, filling eight pages, which refer to attributions. Useful lists are added of past and pres-

ent owners of Stuart portraits. The third and fourth volumes contain the plates, reproducing by a good process more than six hundred of the paintings. Four frontispieces are in photogravure.

The machinery for the student and historian is thus put before the world in extraordinary completeness. Indeed, Park's book does for Stuart what Bode has done for Rembrandt's paintings and Rovinski for the prints, what Kennedy has done for Whistler's etchings, what Armstrong and others have done for the eighteenth-century British masters. In one respect, to which I shall have occasion to return—annotation of the subjects of the paintings—it performs a peculiar service. There is only one reason for regret as I turn the pages of this compendium. It is that Park could not himself see the magnificent form given to the catalogue. There is pathos in the inscription that he left for it: "The author gratefully dedicates these volumes to all those who helped him in his work." At least he was spared long enough to execute practically all of his labor of love.

Lawrence Park was born in 1873 and died in 1924. Some time after his graduation from Harvard he entered the art school of the Boston Museum, and later served as a draughtsman in an office in that city. In 1901 he began architectural practice on his own account. Mr. Sawitsky, in the memoir I have noted, ascribes the origin of Park's interest in old family portraits to researches that he made in the

genealogical field. This interest presently assumed the character of an "all-absorbing passion." He plunged into the study of our pioneer portrait-painters, skilfully sketching in pencil the examples that he saw, and in 1917 he came forward as the celebrant of Joseph Badger, an artist in the first half of the eighteenth century. In the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society he took from Blackburn, Smibert, and Copley paintings previously attributed to them, and assigned to Badger all told a collection of seventy-six portraits. In 1922 he rendered a similar service to Blackburn. From these and other kindred activities, including expeditions into Virginia and South Carolina in search of early American portraits, under the auspices of the Frick Art Reference Library, he passed naturally to the composition of his *magnum opus.* He had, happily, a dual equipment for his task. On the one hand he had artistic *flair,* a kind of clairvoyance for the traits of Stuart. On the other he was gifted with a sense of human values, with the sympathy for little things that is one of the prime resources of the social historian. He had an unquenchable interest in our past, and would take any pains to embody in his text not only the usual facts and accurate description of a given portrait but such touches as might enlarge our acquaintance with the personality involved. This is the aspect of the catalogue in which, as I have already indicated, he has left us a record of peculiar significance.

I have never encountered a compilation of the sort in which dead-and-gone worthies were so deftly revitalized, their thumb-nail biographies so effectively detached from the dry-as-dust atmosphere of the usual "work of reference." Park had an almost uncanny faculty for rescuing from oblivion the slight, fugitive traits which nevertheless help us to visualize not merely the "sitter" but the human being. I dip at random into this little cosmos of bygone Americans. The first name I happen to turn up is that of Theodosia Burr. Well, it is easy enough to be interesting about her, so I try again. This time I come upon Doctor Thomas Bartlett, who modestly began life as an apothecary, keeping a shop on Washington Street, in Boston. But he must have flourished mightily because he soon retired from business, and in due time Park discovers him making the grand tour abroad. He sketches him for us, "a man of commanding presence, six feet in height, and a benevolent, upright, and greatly respected citizen." That, you say, is merely an extension of the portrait, but there is more to make us realize the excellent son of John and Tabitha Bartlett. "When he was in Paris he attended a review of the French troops, and Napoleon, noticing him among the crowd of spectators, asked who he was, and was much impressed when told that he was an American." The beauty of Mrs. William Bingham is obvious from her portrait, but the allusions that recall the admiration in which she

was held by Washington, Jay, and Jefferson add to the beguiling spirit of the page. The former Anne Willing, a famous Philadelphia belle, lives before us again. We know all about Jerome Bonaparte and his American wife, and Park can add nothing to our knowledge, but only the rambler in the byways of American history would recognize John Bullus as an eye-witness of and participant in the memorable encounter between the *Chesapeake* and the *Leopard*. And who save Park would have unearthed the circumstance that the Boston architect and builder, Thomas Clement, was "one of the twenty gentlemen who voted in favor of changing the liturgy for use in King's Chapel"? That remote gesture—it dates from 1785—may seem, to-day, nothing to make a song about, but Park knew his business. In his endeavor to recreate the world in which Stuart moved, by awakening to some sort of anecdotic animation the personages he painted, he drove at the crux of an essential factor in the artist's career. One reason why the portraits are to be treasured is that they illustrate the color and movement of the life of an epoch.

It is difficult, indeed, to withdraw attention from Park's personalia, so intertwined with Stuart the painter is Stuart the historian. But this book is, after all, the memorial of an artist, and I must testify to the exhaustive nature of the catalogue as such. Moving with a sure critical step amongst his examples, so that his record may be regarded as setting a kind of

imprint in the matter of authentication upon the canvases listed, the compiler is also meticulous in respect to dates, dimensions, and so on. His equivalents in words for Stuart's composition and color are as carefully framed as they are vivid, and the manner in which he fixes, whenever possible, the chronological fortunes of a portrait shows that great industry supported his luck in determining places, names, this or that phase of ownership, and all the other details beloved by the collector. Whenever he can do so he notes the public exhibition of a portrait, and he duly records such reproductions as are traceable. Here, in a word, are probably the definitive items of information covering Stuart's career as it is mirrored in his works. Time must inevitably supply emendations and a certain amount of new data, but in essentials the field has been decisively explored.

The catalogue is introduced, appropriately, by a memoir which traverses all earlier documentation and clarifies the subject with persuasive corrections. The first and still indispensable pages on Stuart's life are those embedded by William Dunlap in his "Arts of Design," published in 1834, only six years after the painter's death. They were not satisfactory to his daughter Jane, who contributed three articles about him to *Scribner's Monthly* in the seventies. The substance of these was employed by George C. Mason in the formal biography which he brought out with the sanction of the family in 1879. Mr.

Morgan has used these sources but has also made independent investigations. In broad outline he recites facts already known, sketching a familiar development in the story of Stuart's birth in Rhode Island, his artistic precocity, his contact with the British painter Cosmo Alexander, his youthful voyage to Scotland (via the Southern colonies), his return to these shores, his subsequent period of privation and success in Great Britain, and his long life of steadily growing prosperity and prestige in the United States as the painter of Washington and the notabilities of a period extending well into the nineteenth century. This biographer makes no pretense to interpretation of the works but deals instead, and very searchingly, with the man, his corrections bearing exclusively upon personal matters. Regarding the painter's ancestry, Mr. Morgan joins with the late Charles Henry Hart in throwing cold water upon the legend that the elder Stuart ever served under the Young Pretender, and leaves the old snuff manufacturer without any romantic habiliments whatever. In general he allows to Gilbert Stuart, in his earlier years, a more modest social status than he has hitherto enjoyed. He also indicates a scantier education than is conventionally credited to Stuart. On the much-discussed questions of Stuart's formative period in London and his indebtedness to West, Mr. Morgan admirably organizes all the information available. He prints a recently discovered letter from

Stuart to West which luminously exposes his plight at the time he approached the kind old man. I am glad to see his protest against a belittlement of what West did for the newcomer. Critically speaking, the patron was hardly qualified to tie the shoe-strings of Stuart, but there can be no question of what the latter gained through the discipline and talk in West's studio and through the associations he there enjoyed. Without the encouragement given him by his master, Stuart's progress would have been perceptibly retarded. All of the pages in this book on the crucial years in London and Ireland are interesting and instructive, giving us a lively sense of the genius which lifted Stuart to a position of something like equality with Sir Joshua and the masters of his circle. Mr. Morgan paints him as a man carving out a career with some extraneous aid, but at bottom relying upon his own gift and efforts. He heightens our respect for Stuart.

It is only in that part of his narrative which deals with Stuart's later life that he makes us wince. He will have none of the "pious" tradition that Stuart came back from "love of his own country" and a deep "admiration for George Washington." He plumps, instead, for the hypothesis that the painter returned to America simply to better his material affairs, and a letter of Stuart's, written while he was still abroad, partly confirms this judgment. "Then I expect to make a fortune by Washington alone,"

Sir Joshua Reynolds

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART IN THE COLLECTION OF THOMAS B. CLARKE

wrote Stuart. "I calculate upon making a plurality of his portraits, whole lengths, that will enable me to realize; and if I should be fortunate, I will repay my English and Irish creditors." We wince, as I have said, but not for long. A moment's reflection is enough to remind us that an eye to the main chance was in no wise incompatible with a high-minded purpose in the return, and that even without this there is nothing derogatory in the painter's pursuit of a living where it looked most promising. We can be grateful to Mr. Morgan for exploding the sentimentality of previous biographers without losing anything of our confidence in Stuart's character. It is well to remember, too, that if it was fortunate for him to come home just then, in 1793, it was also very fortunate for us.

He had gone abroad young, untrained, and unknown. He returned in his prime, a painter of recognized repute and with a personality engagingly supplementing his technical equipment. He stepped at once into a commanding position. Without an illustration to enforce the drift of his comments, Mr. Park would nevertheless give the reader of this book much serious food for thought. Stuart was universally accepted as the pictorial laureate of his time. He painted the Presidents and members of their cabinets, he painted the merchants, bankers, and other men of affairs, he painted the social leaders, and if there are "nobodies" in that crowded world of his,

even they are "characteristic," types of the epoch in which the foundations of the republic were being laid. But I must not deviate again into this historical and merely human aspect of Stuart's work, fascinating as it is. The basis of his historical authority in a superb control over his instruments provides an even more compelling theme. As I see him under West's tutelage, he is not occupied in playing "the sedulous ape" at all. Down in his heart he must have known who was master. But in that studio he got opportunity, experience, criticism, and I figure him as developing under all that stimulus the capacities of a born craftsman. There is talk of his derivation from the English school. It is justified, in a measure. He used an idiom perfected by the English school, one exploited in common by the painters of a generation. All the members of that school cultivated much the same pattern. Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, and the others were obviously "brothers under the skin." But does that make any one of them "derivative"? All that we know, all that we need to know, is that Stuart was a powerful master of his craft, a master in his own right.

It is possible, in these days of the rediscovery of early American portraiture, to overrate him—but only when you dislocate the perspective in which he belongs. No one ever knew his own limitations better than Stuart knew his. He was perfectly willing to leave the classical "ten-acre" canvas to West.

Though he liked to say that "no man ever painted history if he could obtain employment in portraits," it is tolerably certain that he was aware of having no proficiency for the category at which he thus loftily glanced. And in portraiture itself the boundaries set for him by his nature were very clearly marked. When he contemplated the profit on that "plurality" of portraits to be drawn from Washington, he was possessed of very little knowledge as to how to draw them, unless he kept well within his preordained scope. For the familiar full-length of the President that is known as "the Lansdowne type" he borrowed the organization of Rigaud's Bossuet, lock, stock, and barrel. Stuart was a wise, thoughtful painter, honest with himself, knowing what he could do and rarely challenging comparisons with workers in different formulas from his own. In his own sphere he functioned superlatively well. The ceremonial portrait might baffle him, so that he left it a little stilted, but even with that he was not precisely maladroit.

In his chosen field, in his natural, lifelike convention, there is a wonderfully spontaneous and intimate quality. I think it sprang, in part, from his insight into character, his sympathy, his unforced alliance with the spirit of his contemporaries. He had intuitions which helped him to divine the inevitable pose for a sitter. But the uniform rightness of the compositions which are brought before us in such profusion in Mr. Park's pages, the æsthetic unity which

marks this great mass of work, must be attributed in the long run to nothing more than the simple, priceless fact of Stuart's knowing his trade. He could draw—accurately, suavely but firmly, beautifully, and with the distinctive accent that denotes creative power. He had a notably judicious and refined, if not particularly original, sense of color. He placed the figure in the rectangle effectively, always with dignity, and sometimes with felicity. And enveloping all these traits was the authority of the true brushman, the true painter. I have seen Stuarts which in sheer brilliance of surface, in sheer force and fineness of technique, disclosed the very soul of "painter's painting." He painted the truth, and he painted it beautifully. It is not the collector alone who should be grateful to Mr. Park. American artists should rejoice in the honor done in these volumes to one of their greatest leaders.

XXV

ARTHUR B. DAVIES

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ARTHUR B. DAVIES

In Whistler's memorable "Ten O'Clock" there are two lines which provoked debate when he delivered the lecture in 1885 and over which argument has cropped up, from time to time, ever since. He said:

"Listen! There never was an artistic period.

There never was an Art-loving nation."

Refutation seems simplicity itself. What of fifteenth-century Italy? What of seventeenth-century Holland? What of eighteenth-century France? But Whistler was wont to know what he was talking about and to read him with care on this subject is to see how just was his conclusion. Unerringly he identified the source of art in the individual artist, starting with that type which, "in the beginning," rejected the prosaic pursuits of men and "stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd." Praxiteles and Rembrandt, Velasquez and Hokusai, our modern artist saw, were the descendants of that primitive groper after beauty, and he clears up the whole matter in the words with which he draws to a close: "We have then but to wait—until, with the mark of the Gods upon him—there comes among us again the chosen—who shall continue what has gone before."

It is only on such a spiritual and even miraculous hypothesis that you can account for the rise of the authentic artist. I can conceive of no other which will explain the appearance amongst us of Arthur B. Davies.

I call him one of the few Sons of No Man's Land, who, with no "literary" intentions whatever, have nevertheless wedded poetry to painting. You have only to glance over the history of art to see how rare they have been in any epoch. Men like Piero di Cosimo and Giorgione and Botticelli are curiously detached apparitions in the Renaissance. There were others of high imagination in that period, of course, but I am speaking especially of the artist who invests some jet of lyrical emotion with a peculiarly intimate and endearing significance. To clarify the distinction still further, by a striking contrast, look first, in German art, at the "Melancholia" of Dürer, an imaginative creation if ever there was one. It invades the mind with a note of baffling mystery. But, in Germany, I would choose Altdorfer for my Son of No Man's Land, rather than Dürer. When he paints the phantasmal "Battle of Arbela" in the Pinacotheca at Munich, bathing it in a light that assuredly never was on sea or land, it is as though he waved a magic wand more potent than any other ever wielded in the North. Very strange, and, indeed, fairly incomprehensible, is his deviation into magic. He was an architect, accustomed to dealing with

ponderable things, and designing, among other edifices, so earthy an affair as a slaughter-house. But when he took up the brush some divine afflatus stirred him and he could make a landscape recalling Blake's phrase, about art being a mode of conversing with Paradise. The Sons of No Man's Land are like that. The mystical fervors of El Greco cause his works to vibrate with an impassioned eloquence that Velasquez, infinitely his superior in the art of painter's painting, could never approach. Rembrandt, inevitably, with his Shakespearean range, had moments of withdrawal into this other-worldly region that I have in mind, moments in which he was less concerned with "keeping his eye on the object" than with realizing a poetic dream. I remember a night scene of his, a "Flight into Egypt," in this exalted mood. There are gleams of the same creative and transfiguring power in his great picture of "The Mill."

Modern art has its exemplars of lyrical vision, if I may so describe it, some of them technically far below their own inspiration, like Arnold Boecklin. There were Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon in France. In England was that painter of symbolism in the grand style, George Frederick Watts, and there were the romantic mediævalists of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Frederick Sandys. In American painting we have had some extraordinarily sensitive denizens of No Man's Land, men like La Farge, in his early poetic

illustrations, Vedder, in the whole pell-mell of his Omar Khayyam and other designs, and, above all, the late Albert Pinkham Ryder. Ryder's "Temple of the Mind" is for elevation and for pure enchantment one of the major achievements of our modern epoch; it is, as Whistler said of one of the great etched portraits of Rembrandt, "a masterpiece in all its elements, beyond which there is nothing." Now let the reader consider what it is that finally validates such a masterpiece, over and above the poetic inspiration that I have sought to isolate, as it were, in this rapid summary. Is it not that each one of the artists I have named is essentially a man apart, an absolutely original figure? Is it not that the artist "with the mark of the Gods upon him" knows no tie save that which binds him to Olympus? He is the product of no nation, no period, no school. He, "the chosen," as I have said before, seems to be literally born into a world which he dominates as his own. With the creative faculty that is bestowed upon him there springs into being a strange, even incredible environment which he proceeds to make credible. It was with this aloofness that Davies came upon the scene.

He was untouched by some of the most imperative influences of the day in American painting, like those of Paris, whether one refers to the rather academic habit of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or the bold stroke of Manet. He painted freely but with no sympathy

for the methods of Duveneck and Chase. He painted out-of-doors but sought no aid from the impressionistic school. He comes down from neither the Academy of Design nor the Society of American Artists. On the contrary, despite excursions to which I shall have presently to refer, he is from beginning to end his own man. The energizing forces in him seem to come entirely from within. You feel this when you follow the various stages of his career, and especially in the period of his training. Writing repeatedly about him, as I am bound to do, for he is to me an inexhaustibly moving theme, I have always to come back for biographical details to the book in which Mr. Duncan Phillips commemorated his art, calling in several collaborators, and I am always struck by the sparseness of those details. The omissions must be due to the artist's own reticence. I knew him as a good talker but I never knew him to talk about himself. He had, in fact, an almost impenetrable reserve and his physiognomy, his figure and carriage, somehow comported with this quality in him, only the beautiful eyes suggesting the seer that he was. Yet there was something indefinable in his slender personality, something in his tone, in his glance, persuading you that though he was in the world he was not of it. In dress and manner he was like unto other men (Davies consciously "looking the artist" is unthinkable), yet you could not be with him for two minutes without feeling his distinction.

I was asked the other day if I did not love him and though we were not intimates I know that I did. His character inspired something more than the admiration which one gives to a man's work, there was about him so much of uprightness, of delicacy, of gentleness, of modesty, and of a burning ardor. All this was compatible, too, with the traits of a practical, resourceful man. One who knew him all his life, having opportunities to observe his character in action that I never had, wrote to me saying: "He was particularly human, capable and energetic in his conduct of the ordinary and business affairs of life." When the celebrated Armory Show of modern art was organized in 1913 no one participated in the affair more helpfully than Davies. Though he kept himself, as I have indicated, unspotted from the world, he played his part, a man among men. But the poet in him, I think, had the governing hand.

As there was a contrast between his outward appearance, scrupulously neat and even conventional, and his inner fires, so there was a contrast between the rôle he was born to fill and the scene upon which he first opened his eyes. He was born at Utica, in 1862. Neither the place nor the time was exactly in harmony with the flowering of artistic genius. Yet it is in his youthful period that, pausing among the few facts of record in the Phillips book, I have a sense of his possession of that original, new-minted quality to which I have referred. Mr. Dwight Wil-

liams, his first instructor, tells in the aforesaid volume how the lad's earliest drawings took him captive. In them there was perceptible "a fine and delicate sense of the value of line and form." In another passage his old friend says: "In our lessons, sketching in and out of doors, it was apparent at all times that he was a young genius of a high order. He had wonderful appreciation of nature and all its beauties and very great capacity for selecting, combining and eliminating. It was rarely necessary to call his attention to any beauty of form or color." Notwithstanding this prompt exercise of decisive faculties there were to follow some years of variegated experience before Davies found himself. There was a mixture of business and art study in Chicago in the later '70's. He began the next decade with engineering activities in Mexico. From certain illustrations of his, made when he was back in New York, studying at the League and working for the magazines, I have gathered that his goal was still elusive. But I recall seeing, in an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, a water-color of his, dating from his formative period, which showed in the landscape background that while he was feeling his way he already had a vein of that precious thing called "quality." I can remember his first full-dress demonstration of his command of that virtue. The dealer, William Macbeth, and the art-loving merchant, Benjamin Altman, had discerned the unique talent of Davies. Putting their

heads together they saw to it that he was made free of Italy and its masterpieces. He must have been about thirty at the time of this initiation, eagerly responsive, "wax to receive and marble to retain." It is no effort of the imagination for me to go back to the exhibition that Macbeth gave him on his return. I can feel as though it were yesterday the first impact of his singularity and his charm.

Both were tinctured by Italian influence but neither lost any of its integrity and here I must speak of the marked independence with which then, and thereafter, Davies moved amongst the ideas of the Renaissance. He never adopted them in the sense of taking over a pattern, either a type of form or a mode of design. In that matter of design particularly he was free from the classical tendency which counted for so much amongst the Renaissance masters. Once past the naïve methods of the earliest Primitives, it became the practice of the Italian painters to seek order and balance in composition. There are great pictures of the Golden Age which are almost diagrammatic in their distribution of line and mass. A certain tradition is fixed and carried on. Even the portentous Venetians, even the tempestuous Tintoretto, at the Scuola di San Rocco, is steadfast in making the given decoration an organized fabric, an episode having a beginning, a middle, and an end. The singularity of Davies consisted largely in his substituting a more spontaneous rhythm for the antique sym-

metry so pronounced in his Italian masters. It was partly instinctive, I think, partly the irresistible movement of his own genius, and, to some extent, the result of his friendly contact with the visible world. He did not so much oscillate between the thing seen and the thing felt as remain loyal to both and extort from both a unified effect. It is, in the directness of its appeal, veritably realistic and at the same time in its spiritualized character it is akin to some such musical masterpiece as the Pastoral Symphony. Incessantly, despite frequent dippings into symbolism, he was wont to deal with actual life, and to endue his vision of it with a tremulous, evanescent beauty.

What a gulf there is between the pictures of women and children that he painted, again and again, and the sentimentalities which are associated in our memories with, for example, the Royal Academy! Motherhood was not, for him, a social state but a mystery of the soul. He couldn't have sentimentalized it if he had tried. Somehow he made it, simply, one more vehicle through which to express incorporeal beauty. There is a lovely and very characteristic picture of his, called "Breath of Autumn," to which I cannot too often return. In it a mother and her little child stand within the shadow of massive oaks, watching a boy who rides past on his white pony. The foreground has the enveloping character of a forest. Beyond one discerns a distant horizon and is conscious of great space. What is the com-

pelling fascination of the thing? Not the figures, not the heavy trees, not the skylit distance, but the subtle mood that exhales from the whole design. I have indicated the lyrical impulse of Davies. You recognize it in a picture like this one, not so much the completed song, the full-rounded allegory, but a swift, unfinished strain, the gust of feeling that is too deep in its origin, too subconscious, to receive absolutely final translation.

His pictures are the last in the world to be interrogated with strict reference to their subjects, as such, or to their titles. His nomenclature, so different from Whistler's, yet resembles it in throwing the beholder back upon meanings purely artistic and personal. "Arrangement in Black and Gold," on a Whistler, is not more sharply divorced from any merely anecdotic purpose than are the phrases which Davies would affix to a picture—"Viola Obligato," "Crescendo," "Birth of Green" or "Unicorns." What shall be said of the "Unicorns," one of the most famous of his inventions? Women who may or may not be priestesses tend three of the fabulous beasts in the foreground. They are grouped beside still, unfathomable waters and these are bounded, far off, by a mighty headland, which, like the sea, seems immeasurably remote, the scenery, again, of No Man's Land. I'm sure Davies had no definitely wrought-out thought when he painted it. He dreamed, rather, and in some happy waking moment gave an

THE THRONE

FROM THE PAINTING BY ARTHUR B. DAVIES

insubstantial reality to his dream. All that we know is that "something beautiful has passed that way."

I do not attempt any detailed enumeration or description for, quite apart from the great body of work that he produced, which would take me too far, what chiefly interests me is just this vague if not quite abstract nature of his central motive. I do not forget that alliance of his with the visible world which I have already stressed, the truth in his studies of more or less tangible themes, or, in particular, his remarkable dealings with landscape. Years ago he painted in his "Along the Erie Canal" a picture that might not unreasonably be termed a topographical record. Later he made some pictures of mountains and trees in the West which are as naturalistic as a disciple of Barbizon might have made them. Among the productions of his recent years there are water-colors done in France and Italy, sketches of architecture and landscape, which show how devotedly faithful he could be to the character of the object that can be, so to say, measured and felt. But the essential Davies is the man who nevertheless puts before you not so much the thing seen as the thing divined.

The point is sharply, I had nearly said dramatically, emphasized by his treatment of the nude, constantly recurrent through the bulk of his work in painting and in black and white. He drew from life when he wished, from the days of his pupilage on-

ward, and since he was a powerful draughtsman he could register a contour with the accuracy and force of an academician. He had a firm but supple line. Amongst all my impressions of his work I cherish first and last those of certain masterly drawings. But, on the whole, the veracity which is one of their merits was not what engaged him when he took up the brush. Then he was released from dependence on the model and came to grips with his idea, and that meant grace and rhythm, the keys to mood. He played like a composer upon the lines of the human form. He endowed them with an æsthetic interest far above the level of mere fact. He left them ineffably refined and poetic. He left them also clothed in a beautiful dignity. It was not for nothing that, after his explorations in the Renaissance, he came to know the arts of Egypt and Greece. They fostered in him the feeling that he always had for a large, monumental conception of form.

I watched his evolution, as I have noted, from the time of his first exhibition in New York, and I can recall one moment in which I wondered if he were going to make an incongruous breach in his ivory tower. It was ten years or more ago when some dancing figures in a decorative scheme disclosed a movement on his part toward the cubistic theory. He gave later other signs of modernistic curiosity. Among a lot of studio belongings that he decided to sell there was a considerable quantity of things

by contemporary Frenchmen which seemed utterly outside his wonted taste. But in the long perspective of his career these incidents fall into an almost obscure subordination and testify to nothing more than his experimental disposition. He was a versatile man, a worker in oils and water-colors, a painter of easel pictures and mural decorations, a lithographer and an etcher. He was a sculptor, too, and not long before his death he had thrown himself with delight upon the designing of tapestries. He was, besides, an omnivorous reader, with a philosophical turn of mind. He was bound to interest himself in every new thing and in some cases to test its possibilities for himself. But he could not throw off the zeal for beauty that had been with him from his youth up and experimentation could not lead him away from his predestined goal. Endlessly on the quest in the world of art, endlessly adventurous, and matching his eclectic furore with a prodigious industry, so that he poured forth an immense amount of work, that work is harmonized throughout by the gravity and rectitude of his spirit. His art remains "all of a piece," the fruit of an organic idealism, of an unswerving fidelity to that which, being beautiful, is eternally fugitive yet eternally inseparable from the achievements of a true artist. When he died in Italy in 1928 it seemed to me that he had been received back into the company of those noble souls of the past whose tradition he had so loyally extended into

the present. He had not copied what they had done. But he had their idiom. He had the speech of a Son of No Man's Land.

XXVI

GEORGE BELLOWS

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GEORGE BELLOWS

Appreciation of an artist's work obviously does not require that one should meet him face to face. Nevertheless, it is sometimes a help toward understanding. In my own experience I have felt this to be the case with regard to the art of George Bellows. I knew him over a period of years, well enough to learn something of his nature, and the more I saw of him the more I perceived the inevitability of his work as the fruit of a way of thinking and feeling. What he did sprang instinctively from first-hand dealings with life. I have never known a man more direct in his contacts, more spontaneously or artlessly a realist, more whole-heartedly sincere. It was his wont to take the shortest route to a given point. In talk about the old masters, whose works in the European galleries he had never seen and with whose history, I gathered, he had not much concerned himself, he evinced no great perspective, but at the same time he knew his way about and there was something refreshing about the wholesome unconventionality of his judgments. He had seen much over here, and with a delightfully candid vision he had philosophized what he had seen. He used to puzzle me by his absorption in the mysteries of Jay

Hambidge's "dynamic symmetry" until I saw that they were not mysteries to him but practical aids to the painting of a picture. I had thought it odd that an artist of his stripe should get enmeshed in recondite theory, but he took the thing in his stride like any of the instruction he had received in the time of his pupilage. For him it was one more path to the truth, and he searched after that, I think, more ardently than after anything else.

The Americanism which is one of his outstanding traits has sometimes been identified with his choice of subjects and with the circumstances of his training. As a matter of fact it had deeper roots. It was something implicit in the whole man. Born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1882, his blood came down to him through an ancestry reaching back to 1632, when Colonel Benjamin Bellows came to this country and founded the town of Bellows Falls in Vermont. His father was an architect, who sent him in due course to Ohio State University. He is said to have shown some precocity in draughtsmanship, but I have never heard of his giving at that time any other signs of artistic predestination. "You know," he once confided to me, "I used to play baseball," meaning that he had been regularly allied with the sport, and despite his father's professional rôle and its influence, I always think of him as of having lived his youth pretty close to the natural, utterly unsophisticated interests of the ordinary human being. When I knew him he

was a tall, strongly built, strapping fellow, good-natured, a perfect sportsman, altogether manly and endearing. He must have been like that always, a genuine type if ever there was one.

In 1903, when he was twenty-one, he came to New York, to study under Kenneth Hayes Miller, Robert Henri, H. G. Maratta, and Jay Hambidge. It was Henri, I imagine, who did more than any of the others to bring out his talent. An "Early Nude" of his, dating from 1906, one of the first of the canvases to proclaim the advent of a capable painter in him, is clearly the product of Henri's admonition. His progress was very rapid. Within three or four years of his arrival in New York he was an artist with whom it was necessary to reckon. His success with the public was reasonably prompt. Before he was thirty, paintings by him had found their way into more than one museum, and when he died, early in January, 1925, he was represented in art institutions all over the country. The memorial exhibition at the Metropolitan which followed his death with unprecedented celerity, brought back his Americanism in special relief.

Consider certain of his predecessors in that series of commemorative affairs at our greatest museum which has taken on a kind of canonical significance. A Whistler or a Chase makes you think of all manner of æsthetic refinements, of subtle experiment, of painting saturated in more or less Europeanized cul-

ture. But there are others in the list who tell a very different story, men like Thomas A. Eakins, Winslow Homer, and Alden Weir. These recall you to what is most American in our native art—its fresh, unspoiled character, its invincible raciness. With the differences that individuality imposes Bellows is of their line. To glance again at that matter of his subjects, I do not believe that he painted New York wharf rats any more than Winslow Homer painted Maine fishermen because he thought there was anything talismanic about them. He did not say to himself: "Go to, I shall paint this because it is American." He had no *arrière-pensée* about it at all, but painted what he saw because it was there and because it roused the gusto in him. It would have been just the same if by some accident of fate he had gone abroad and had painted there. A study by him of an Arab chief or an Italian peasant would have been an intensely American picture because it would have had all the American traits of breadth, simplicity, sincerity, and blunt truth which Bellows drew from the soil. If one of his prize-ring pictures were to stray into the Salon, a Frenchman might sense in it dimly the influence of Manet, but he wouldn't have the least doubt about the nationality of the painter. That would be manifest in the very grain and texture of the picture, in its complete freedom from that factitious veneer which we sometimes take over from a foreign source.

It is this central gift in Bellows, this harmony which he established between his art and the world in which he lived, that sealed the fitness of the exhibition at the Metropolitan. It came in response to a wide-spread public sentiment. People feel that Bellows was one of themselves. He not only painted the things they know but into the fibre of his work put something with which they sympathize, something which they can understand, something keyed to the rhythm of American life. And he did this with a brilliantly powerful technique. That was, of course, the other indispensable ratification of the show. If subject, as subject, were alone to be considered, then the wharf rats and pugilists and polo-players of George Bellows might be no nearer canonization than the bootblacks and newsboys of the late J. G. Brown.

What constitutes the achievement of Bellows is his fusion of subject and treatment, his matching of truth with technique in a remarkable balance. He did this, too, in greater variety than is, I think, generally realized. Besides the polo-players, pugilists, and wharf rats I have just cited he painted nudes, landscapes, and portraits, made a notable historical picture, deviated once into religious art, and in his later years was dipping more and more into imaginative composition. Indiscriminate admirers lamented his untimely death as cutting him off at the zenith of his powers. I hold a higher opinion of him than that.

The real tragedy resided in the cessation of a progress that might have carried him immeasurably further. Bellows was only forty-two when he died. His ripest years were before him and his latest works show that his path was about ready to take an even more exciting turn. It is doing him an injustice to assume that he had shown all the stuff that was in him. Especially as it was his marked characteristic to be always moving and striving, always set upon another adventure. The most exhilarating thing about him, to me, was that he did not stand still but was forever attacking new problems with joyous zest. From the beginning I saw everything that he publicly exhibited in New York. He didn't by any means invariably strike twelve. I remember things of his that appeared to me to be flat failures. But I never saw a dull, standardized picture from his hand. I never saw anything of his that hadn't some forceful truth in it.

That is what lifts the "Early Nude" out of the ruck of academic student's work, that, and a certain fluent directness in the technique. Where, in our modern categories, does this technique belong? There is always danger in speculation as to an artist's spiritual ancestry, and in the case of an untravelled man like Bellows it is particularly difficult to link him with any school or influence. I remember little of his likes and dislikes, though they sometimes cropped out in our conversation. One memory that

does survive is of his indifference to the picture involving a lot of machinery in its fabrication and his more than indifference to academic rule-of-thumb. Immersed as he was in Hambidge's mathematics, he none the less remained a man loyal to the raw phenomena of the visible world, keeping his eye ruthlessly on the object. If he had any artistic forefather it was Manet, a Manet seen for himself here and there and in a measure filtered down to him through Robert Henri's example. I mention this because, indeed, no artist exists in a vacuum, immune from all external pressure. There is a continuity in art from which no man entirely escapes and there is a tie, of a sort, between Bellows and the Manet tradition. But it does not touch the integrity of that Americanism to which I am always referring. If he has the tradition it is only as a method which he somehow fills out and energizes by his own personality. His art is pure Bellows when he comes to paint, as early as 1907, the fascinating "Forty-Two Kids," with its tangle of nude boyish forms moving in and about the water. He did some of the best, most unforgettable things of his career in the period of that picture, including the "Up the Hudson," which passed into the Metropolitan in 1908.

It is an interesting point that for the painter of the "Early Nude," for the student of Henri seemingly dedicated to the handling of form, he so soon developed a formidable grasp upon landscape. I say "formi-

dable" advisedly, for in those open-air scenes of his, done in his later twenties, there is a force akin to that of a physical blow. His impressions along the river-front are solid, four-square things. I do not know how he actually made them, whether he sat down to them out-of-doors or worked them over in the studio, but they have the air of subjects grasped and painted at a stroke. They have extraordinary truth, extraordinary character. He painted much on the Hudson and on the East River, sometimes embracing bridges, docks, and the types frequenting the latter in his vision, and occasionally he touched life in the humbler streets between, as in the memorable "Cliff-Dwellers" of 1913, with its frowsy tenements and the teeming hordes at their base. He made himself in some sort a laureate of the city. Since he did not poetize his themes I am tempted to say that he gave us painted prose, but that antithesis is only fair when you qualify it with the statement that his was an art raising facts to a higher power. There was a personal quality in his forthright transcripts of the truth that submerged its merely commonplace elements. In time it gave a deeper, more complex tone to his landscapes. There must have been some tender emotional places in his cosmos. We didn't by any means always see eye to eye and I think he was amiably bewildered by my incurable predilection for "charm," as though it were one of those things which critics talk about while artists leave them to take care

of themselves. Perhaps he was the more diverted because he knew that I didn't very often find it in his own work. But if I ever found it there it was in his landscapes. In the several studies that he made of a ship's ribs set up upon the shore, he had a positively impressive way of massing hill and sky behind the embryo craft. Then there come back to my mind two or three scenes, "A Wet Night," "Spring—Gramercy Park," and "A Day in June," in which the "natural magic," the sense of trees and of mysterious light, evoked a feeling that some one almost romantic had passed that way. Yes, he could have had charm if he had cared persistently to cultivate it. It gets into a painting, to be sure, involuntarily, under the unconscious play of an artist's temperament. But in Bellows, I think, it was just a casual last-minute gift of the fairies and he rarely gave it its chance. Perhaps he could not have done anything of the kind without dislocating his whole scheme of things.

Dalliance with charm might have cooled his passion for actuality, for the vivid, inspiring bursts of human energy. He loved best to paint the figures of a sentient, moving world, the plunging men and horses of the polo pictures he made around 1910, the gorgeous but still very twentieth-century picturesqueness of "The Circus," done in 1912, or the ugly violence of his three or four prize-ring subjects. Life as he was inclined to depict it was crude, tangible,

and essentially episodical. He took it on the whole as he found it. He was a picture-maker rather than an illustrator, as he showed when he made some compositions for Donn Byrne's "The Wind Bloweth," and for Wells's book, "Men like Gods," two or three years before he died. But he had the ideal illustrator's faculty of observation and a good deal of the illustrator's instinct for the telling action.

Of design in the high inventive sense he gave no sign for a long time. It did not concern him when he was moving up and down his American world, on the lookout for the arresting "slice of life." But it drew his imagination after a while, and it holds in a firm unity the drama of his "Edith Cavell." By that time, 1918, Hambidge or no Hambidge, he had gained in structural composition, and it is with that really noble and beautiful picture in mind that I most poignantly regret his early taking-off. It is enkindling to think of what the painter of the "Edith Cavell" might have done with high-erected themes if the gods had only been kind. He wouldn't have passed lightly from triumph to triumph. "The Crucifixion," painted in 1923, is a lamentably stagey affair, mechanically built up, and as melodramatic in sentiment as it is artificial in attitudes and gestures. The "Two Women," belonging to the following year and on exhibition at the time of his death, was hardly more persuasive. The juxtaposition of a draped with an undraped figure, so familiar among

Edith Cavell

FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE BELLOWS

the painters of the Renaissance, was accomplished in it merely as an arrangement of facts; it was not transmogrified by art, and it lacked, if I may wickedly repeat the word, charm. Bellows was never a colorist, and, without sensuous glamour, the picture failed to come off. There was a want, too, of the dashing *maestria* which he so often employed. Main strength seemed to have taken the place of slashing technique. But design, nevertheless, was steadily growing in him. It counted with increasing effect in his portraits, notably in the "Emma and Her Children," of 1923, and in the captivating "Lady Jean." In these things, in the Wells illustrations I mentioned just now, and especially in his remarkable lithographs, there are striking intimations of what must have proved a great expansion. He was coming more and more to grips with ideas, and I firmly believe that with maturing powers he would have dealt with them in the grand style. The years would have brought him other things, too, in all probability—a more sensitive quality in painted surface, a richer and at the same time a lighter gamut of color with subtler tones, and a finer, more gracious sense of beauty. Some of the late and masterly lithographs point to a refining tendency in his treatment of form. But in what sure possession of what splendid attributes he stood when the brush fell from his hand! As the drawings, the pictures, and the lithographs show, he could draw superbly. His touch as a

painter was swift and certain, carrying a decisively individualized accent. His technical equipment made the firmest foundation for that which he had chiefly to give to the world, the eloquence of truth. His work has enduring reality, and it is American to the core. No man of his time has a stronger claim upon remembrance in the annals of American art.

XXVII

H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY

XXVII

H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY

In the exhibitions of the Academy and the Society of American Artists, back in the 80's and 90's, there used to appear certain charming pictures, poetic in subject and very graceful in execution, signed by H. Siddons Mowbray. The "Festival of Roses" one would be called, "Schererzade" another, "Evening Breeze" a third. Romantic fancy touched them and they were well painted, being especially marked by skilful design and draughtsmanship. They were liked by the public, as well as by the artist's colleagues, and collectors snapped them up. The essential drift of his career seemed settled. Yet it was to take an entirely different direction. Dormant in Mowbray's make-up was the gift for filling great wall spaces with infinitely more elaborate compositions, and through sheer innate ability he was ready to exercise it when the opportunity came. He developed forthwith into one of the most distinguished mural painters this country has ever produced and was kept busy as such until the end. He had just finished an important commission when he died at his home in Washington, Conn., on January 13, 1928. It is with peculiar sympathy that I venture upon a

brief sketch of his life and personality. We were friends for many years and I can hardly say which drew me to him the more persuasively, his beautiful work or the fine, gentle, endearing traits which marked him as a man. There was something lovable and inspiring about Mowbray. He had ideals, principles, and stood by them with a kind of modest steadfastness. The close comrade of the artists who set the pace forty years ago, McKim, Saint-Gaudens, and the rest, he shared in their campaign with a high seriousness and a devotion which make him good to remember.

His father, John Henry Siddons, was an Englishman who went out to Egypt as the representative of a London banking house, and the future artist was born in Alexandria on August 5, 1858. The banker died, of sunstroke, not long after, and Mrs. Siddons returned to England. She had substantial ties there. One of her kinsmen, in John William Croker's heyday, had been established by him as a clerk in the Admiralty. The family borrowed a gleam of glory from the period of its lodgment in Kensington Palace. But one member of it, Mrs. Siddons's sister, had married a chemist, George M. Mowbray, who had taken her to America, and the widow from Egypt presently followed them to these shores. She died in Brooklyn, on the way to Titusville, Pa., where the Mowbrays were fixed. The boy was barely five when he was thus left alone. But the Mow-

brays took him to their hearts, adopted him, making their name his own, and thenceforth life unfolded very happily. His new father gave him a comradeship of the tenderest affection, and as time went on did everything to foster his ambitions. These seemed at first to beckon toward things utterly prosaic. Titusville was in the midst of the famous oil boom, a grim, greasy, rough place, in which George Mowbray functioned as a refiner of oil and a maker of nitroglycerine. Historic events broke the monotony of the region. The Civil War was going on, and in after years the artist was wont to recall the excitement when Lincoln's assassination befell and the news reached the town. But mostly he was conscious of humdrum things, and these, indeed, long occupied him. When the family moved to North Adams, Mass., the manufacture of high explosives continued to absorb its head. Young Mowbray was present at the blast that marked the closing stages of the boring of the Hoosac Tunnel, and one of his memories was of going to Canada as a lad of sixteen to explode a memorable charge in the construction of the Granville Canal. He seemed destined to be a chemist himself.

But at Drury Academy, in North Adams, where he was pursuing his studies, he had got interested in the drawing of maps, embellishing them with ships, whales, and animals, in the manner of the old cartographers, and from this diversion came, he said

long afterward, "a keen desire to draw and the first germ in my art career." Chemistry went by the board. Other interests temporarily intervened. He competed for West Point and won, but a few months of experience showed him that he did not care for military things and, with his adopted father's approval, he resigned. In the winter of 1877 he fell into the hands of A. C. Howland, the landscape-painter, over at Williamstown, who gave him lessons for which he used to drive the five or six miles in a cutter. In less than two years he was in Paris, welcomed by Stanley Mortimer and "Billy" Coffin, and soon entered at the Atelier Bonnat, one of the hardest workers there. He stayed in Paris for some years, poor but happy, making hosts of friends, including young Frenchmen who took him on visits to their homes in the provinces, so that he saw much more of the national life than falls to the lot of the average sojourner in Bohemia. In time he made a rather unusual place for himself. He prospered, after a fashion, making a trip to Spain, on which he copied "Las Hilanderas" and "Las Meninas" in the Prado, and at Seville heard Gayarré, the great tenor, sing in the cathedral. In Paris he sold his first picture, a costume study, to Tooth, the London dealer, for 100 francs. He had more than one painting hung in the Salon, and there ensued a profitable connection with a French firm that was glad to take his work. It looked as if he were going to

be absorbed into the life around him. Then, fearing that he might become "a hopeless employee of the dealer," he came home.

He stepped at once into the circle of the leaders, joined the Society of American Artists, and was soon on the crest of the wave. Thomas B. Clarke bought pictures from him and encouraged others to do the same thing, a service which Mowbray liked gratefully to recall. But just at this apparently crystallizing period he reached a turning-point. "A fondness for the Italian art of the Renaissance came over me," he says in an autobiographical fragment. "I wanted above all things to do mural work." Clarke got him his first commission, a panel three feet by six, to go over a mantel in the Athletic Club's house at Travers Island. "Amateurish" he found it, as he looked back at it, but at least it meant a start. Saint-Gaudens, stanch believer in his decorative aptitudes, moved the architect Geo. B. Post to assign him a score of lunettes in the C. P. Huntington house, and in the 90's he was dedicated absolutely to mural painting. The Huntington job kept him from bearing any part in the famous demonstration of the decorators at the Chicago Fair, but he was to have even more significant chances. In 1897, when he was working on a ceiling in the Frederick Vanderbilt house at Hyde Park, he returned to town one day in the same train with McKim, who fell to talking about the then recently created American Acad-

emy at Rome. The architect said some things which I must quote:

We are starving for standards within reach, to stimulate our taste and inspire emulation. It is a pity that more artists will not consent to momentarily become students, and endeavor to grasp the spirit that produced Rome. I pity the artist who does not feel humbled before its splendid examples of art. I have just been there and speak from experience. I think, for example, of the Borgia apartments, their perfect unity, their glory of color, and masterly detail. I think what it would mean to have such a thing here with us. In the library of the University Club that I am working on, I would give the world to have reproduced that grave richness of Pintoricchio. I am fearful of the garishness of modern decoration for a library. The decoration of such should whisper and not shout. If you ever felt like undertaking a bit of self-abnegation and spending two or three years in Rome, like the very student I have been talking of, I'd like to get you the commission to do some copying that might serve us in the library's decoration.

The conversation was crucial. Mowbray was occupied subsequently with his decorations for the Appellate Court-house, in New York, but McKim kept at the Pintoricchio idea for the University Club, and with the decisive aid of the late Charles T. Barney it was put in train. The artist had a serious illness. As he came out of it he was welcomed and invigorated with the glad news that he was to do the

work. He sailed for Italy in the fall of 1902, settled in Rome, by and by took a constructive hand in the affairs of the Academy—becoming director in 1903–4—and saturated himself in the decorations of the Borgia apartments. Working all the time on his own paintings, he brought them home and installed them with prodigious success. "I used to consider this as my library," said McKim to Morgan, when he showed him the room; "now it is Mowbray's." The famous man was deeply impressed. "I want a gem," he had said to McKim, when he had called upon the latter to create the library in Thirty-sixth Street, and for its enrichment the University Club work persuaded him that Mowbray was exactly the man. In those two buildings the artist's chief monuments are enshrined, the style is worked out through which he conclusively manifested his genius.

What were the predominating elements in that genius? Primarily an inborn sense of beauty, with an inborn faculty for expressing it. But the old discipline of the Atelier Bonnat had much to do with his development. It made him a master craftsman. When his patron cheerfully acquiesced in his sending his "Young Bacchus" to the Salon as early as 1879, it was undoubtedly because Bonnat felt that Mowbray had the root of the matter in him, that he could really draw and paint. He drew superbly, using a strong but delicate line, and his technique was in all aspects singularly finished and authoritative, the

technique of a thoroughly sound workman. His ideas were lofty. They were poetic, as they had been in his younger days of picture-making, but now, in his mural painting, they took a more and more monumentally allegorical turn. They were evolved, too, to an accompaniment of a luxuriant handling of conventional motives, derived from his enthusiastic studies in the Vatican. Pintoricchio was not his sole guide there. The hall ceiling at the Morgan Library, both in the distribution of its compartments and in the treatment of the designs filling them, follows very closely Raphael's ceiling in the Camera della Segnatura. Raphael's tradition, too, had a sharp influence upon his use of formal decoration in relief. But Pintoricchio, if not his only master, was the one who most profoundly moved him. Mowbray is, in certain passages at the University Club, frankly the copyist, but it would be a grossly superficial view of the matter that placed these passages in the foreground. What he did was literally to take over the old Italian's hypothesis, make it his own, and, in a manner implying original force and taste, give an essentially free and independent investiture to the ceiling and walls. I have cited McKim's fine saying, that the library was no longer his but Mowbray's. I remember what an impression of organic unity I received when I saw the room, back in 1904, on its first exposure, and repeated study of it since has only confirmed the point. Mowbray collaborated with McKim like an instinctive architect. Between them

they made a masterpiece of architectural and decorative design. A phrase in the passage which I have quoted from the architect touches the gist of the matter, that in which he argues that the decoration of a library "should whisper and not shout." Mowbray magnificently grasped that principle.

There are no rules for the making of a work of art. Genius makes its own laws. Carpaccio may adorn the walls of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni with the pages of a picture-book. Tintoretto may disdain architectural convention at San Rocco. Raphael may be lucidly intellectual, and Tiepolo the headlong virtuoso. But there is a curious indefinable necessity to which all these masters—and every true painter of mural decoration—must inevitably conform. It is that the painting should "look well on the wall," be obviously in its predestined place, somehow a structural part of the whole. How beautifully Mowbray followed the axiom! His way, which had been Pintoricchio's way, and which he revived at once clairvoyantly from the past and freshly in his own world, with a gesture of his own, was to fill the given space with gracious symbolical figures, enmeshed in a quietly shimmering web of arabesques and color. Picture and ornament were fused in a rich but never too assertive ensemble. He liked deep reds, and greens, and blues, with the gleam of gold accenting the mass in details that he often lifted into substantial relief, as Pintoricchio had done in the Borgia apartments and at Siena. Taking the stylistic cue

that the old master gave him, he recovered exactly the classical grace and restraint that mark pure Renaissance ornamentation. At the bottom of his executive proficiency, which made him the master of both paint and plaster, there played an extraordinary faculty for design. I have had varied sensations contemplating the positive world of motives at the University Club and in the Morgan Library—apprehending the great major panels and lunettes with their stately figures, the subordinate pictorial designs and the portraits, the endlessly inventive arrangement of conventional details. But first and last the evidence of decorative power that stays in my mind is the coordinating art with which all these factors are held together in a glorious equilibrium. Never a trace of excess or uncertainty in form or color! Never a threat to the balance of the whole! Always the unity that spells serene repose, the maintenance of a proud, sumptuously decorative conception under the sway of an architectural ideal!

Mowbray had amongst his resources the practicality which is inseparable from an architect's character. The same readiness which had enabled him in his youth to direct the force of nitroglycerine in a huge blast was with him all his life. He knew how to deal with hard facts. He decorated a room with the instinct of a builder working in him. In all our school of mural painters, and we have had some eminent practitioners since La Farge blazed the way,

there has been no one who could beat Mowbray in allying a painting to its architectural surroundings. But if I love to think of him as a master of his craft, I love also to think of him as a spirit of illumination and idealism, making his walls so fair to look upon, spreading upon them uplifting ideas and a rare beauty. Late in his life, in 1924, he turned from the big commissions to which he was habituated and painted for his own delight fifteen pictures illustrating the life of Christ, following Florentine precedent in composition but lending to his episodes a dignity and an emotional weight that could have sprung only from intense feeling. He was dealing with old themes but he gave them new life. And he was the poet once more, as he had been in those fantasies with which at the outset he had won admiration, the poet rising to a graver and more touching level. He never lost that imaginative, revivifying power of his. He died just as he had completed a series of panels for the new annex to the Morgan Library, imposing designs in which he gave final evidence of the potency of his mind and energy. They illustrate types and periods in the conquest of civilization, the majestic figures of history such as Darius and Alexander, momentous movements like that which produced the art of Greece. It was characteristic of Mowbray thus to close his life on a large, lofty note. From beginning to end his work was on an exalted plane, his soul on the side of the angels.

XXVIII

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

XXVIII

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

I HAVE many memories of Augustus Saint-Gaudens. In the mind's eye I see him in his New York studio, standing before the just finished Shaw Memorial—and tormenting himself with doubts as to whether he had made it quite what he wanted it to be. In the same place, now all swept and garnished, I see him gravely listening to one of Beethoven's quartets, in the concert annually held there in memory of our old friend, the architect, Joseph M. Wells. Then the scene shifts to Paris and Saint-Gaudens walks to and fro before the big Stevenson relief for Edinburgh, watching an assistant occupied upon the very important lettering, or in London we stand together in the presence of Sargent's "Three Graces," and he waxes fervid over the painting. I can hear him reciting a comic adventure and enriching the anecdote with the gestures and facial expression of a veritable actor. He comes back to me, in many places and in many moods, one of the most original personalities I have ever known, a great artist of invincible modesty, now absorbed in revery, now filled with a childlike gaiety, a man good to remember. But of all the environments in which I picture him the one which stays in the mind as most ideally

belonging to him is that which he recreated amongst the hills of New Hampshire.

It was a curious turn of fate that brought him to settle at Cornish, in an ancient brick house that had once been "Huggin's Folly," a tavern. Saint-Gaudens was, in a sense, a sophisticated man, accustomed to urban, sophisticated backgrounds. Born in Dublin, in 1848, the son of a Frenchman and an Irishwoman, he was brought to this country as a child and grew up in New York City. He was in his teens when he went to Paris and entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts to study under Jouffroy, and when the Franco-German War took him from that anchorage he proceeded to Rome. A tablet marks the studio where the *Scultore Americano* labored there from 1871 to 1875. He knew much of European travel and contacts, and, I may add, found high appreciation abroad. At Paris, in 1900, when he exhibited his "Sherman" in the Salon, they gave him the medal of honor, and I remember the gusto with which a French critic, the late Paul Leroi, told me then of his admiration for our artist. He was enthusiastic about the reliefs, especially the portrait of Bastien-Lepage, and rejoiced, indeed, in all that Saint-Gaudens had done. It was work possessing a beautiful integrity, he thought, well done, sincere, without a trace of trickery about it. All this is very characteristic of the sculptor, his cosmopolitanism, his busy, shining place in the world. He was most actively a part of

our artistic Renaissance, the contemporary of La Farge, Whistler, McKim, Sargent, a figure in the forefront of things. Yet to-day, years after his death, I visualize him as somehow detached from the very world with which he was so intimately allied, living almost aloof in a sylvan hermitage, and there bringing forth his designs out of long, long, deeply pondered thoughts. His house and his studio remain on the scene untouched. Under a marble altar and canopy in the grounds his ashes repose. At Aspet, as the place is called, replicas of his works are assembled in bronze or plaster. Here, in short, is the sanctuary of his genius, and if I dwell upon the subject now it is because that sanctuary has been made a permanent thing.

Mrs. Saint-Gaudens and her son Homer so envisaged it on the sculptor's death, and for a long time it was largely due to their generosity that the public was permitted to throng through the studios. In fact, without their self-sacrifice the Saint-Gaudens Memorial could never have existed. With their co-operation, however, it was duly incorporated under the laws of the State of New Hampshire, a Board of Trustees was formed, and with the aid of numerous friends an endowment fund of $100,000 was sought. The sum, unfortunately, was not completed when Mrs. Saint-Gaudens died, but the confidence with which she left her plan to be realized was soon thereafter confirmed. Late in December, 1926, at a meet-

ing of the trustees, a conclusive drive was organized, and by the end of April in 1927 it was reported that the fund had been raised. Arrangements were forthwith made for the deed to the memorial, previously in the hands of a trust company, to be delivered to the board, which decided to take formal possession of the property on May 1. Classes of membership were established, ranging from annual members contributing ten dollars to founders contributing not less than $5,000 and matters of administration were settled. Homer Saint-Gaudens undertook to compile a catalogue and to prepare an illustrated pamphlet. The Saint-Gaudens Memorial thus entered definitely into the company of American art museums.

If the sculptor himself had ever dreamed that such a tribute might be offered to him he would have loved the thought of its being fixed upon just that spot. He cared for beauty above all else and Aspet is very beautiful. Trees and lawns, flowers and shrubs, make a scene that is as serene as it is lovely, and when Babb took the buildings in hand he added touches that in their classical simplicity leave the old New England air of the place intact. If the columns at the Studio of the Pergola are antique in style they do not jar with the raciness of the birches near by. The fountain by which Saint-Gaudens used to sit in reflection or in talk with his friends recalls, for a moment, the note of Italy but it remains "in the picture," which, from the groves in the foreground to Mt. Ascutney

beyond, is pure New Hampshire. There are places in the world wholly saturated in the genius of this or that single artist. But I know of no master whose art has quite the setting given to the art of Saint-Gaudens. He was working on his first Lincoln when the late Charles C. Beaman discovered the region to him in the eighties, and one of its advantages for the sculptor, he said, was that he would find there "plenty of Lincoln-shaped men." I don't know whether Saint-Gaudens ever utilized them or not. But of one thing I am certain, that the place must have enormously stimulated his sense of beauty.

It thus ministered to his essential faculty, which functioned, as I have indicated, in a singular isolation as regarded the schools and movements of his time. For some artists it is important to be *en rapport* with what their contemporaries are doing. From the start Saint-Gaudens was his own man, and developed a method and a style extraordinarily free from external influences. A cursory glance at his early bust of William M. Evarts might lead one to surmise that he had had some traffic with the classical tradition to which we were so largely subject before his rise. As a matter of fact, he broke with that tradition in his youth. Jouffroy, at the Ecole, took care of that, an academic but in no wise pedantic type, and the reliefs which date from the American's earlier period are immeasurably away from anything like a hard conventionality. I know that Saint-Gau-

dens had a profound respect for certain types more austere than those which he might nominally have been expected to prefer. We would talk sympathetically together of Ingres and Chasseriau, among painters, and I have somewhere a letter, written to me at the time Paul Dubois died, expressing the warmest appreciation of that sculptor. But appreciation didn't necessarily spell emulation with Saint-Gaudens. It was his custom to hew close to his own line, and to observe his art at full length, as is made possible by the very full collection at the memorial, is to be impressed anew by the independence of his artistic character. We have never had a master more absolutely free from derivative traits.

To what, after all, save his innate quality, are you to refer the grace of such figures as the "Amor Caritas" in the Luxembourg, the figures for the Vanderbilt mantelpiece, now in the Metropolitan Museum, and those he made for the Morgan tomb at Hartford, ultimately destroyed by fire? The caryatides of the Erectheum may have given him a hint but hardly more than that. No, Saint-Gaudens was an original creative artist or nothing, a man who came to renew American sculpture through the operation of gifts intensely personal. He was the product of no school and he founded none. We have sculptors abundantly worthy of him, some of whom were trained in his studio, but no one has ever recaptured his peculiar distinction. He is to us what Alfred

Stevens and Alfred Gilbert are to the English, what Rodin and Bourdelle are to the French. The thing that made him a renovating force was, of course, just this rich originality, but it wouldn't have been half so effective if he had not established a perfect equilibrium amongst his resources. He consulted life, he was an uncompromising realist, in the modelling of a statue, and he was, in an almost tragic sense of the phrase, a conscientious, disciplined craftsman. I say "tragic" because there was something very nearly deserving the epithet about the agony of solicitude which vibrated in Saint-Gaudens over the solution of a technical problem. He would keep a monument under his hand for years, throwing all thought of cost to the winds, before he would dismiss it as right—and even then I do not think he was thoroughly contented. I used to marvel at his sensitiveness to the criticism of some casual visitor. The opinion he asked for really interested him, and if he thought it even approximately just it made him anxious. His life was one long search after perfection.

Perhaps, in the beginning, it had to do with technique rather than with the expression of ideas. The early reliefs to which I have alluded, portrait plaques and medallions, are enchanting just for their modelling alone, delicate, supersubtle modelling, in which he seems to revive the evanescent charm of the Tuscan Renaissance, the melting touch of Mino and the like. But he very soon came to grips with larger

issues, and I wonder if it is generally realized that this light-handed virtuoso, this master of grace and decorative elegance, never rested satisfied with virtuosity alone but was, in the bulk of his work, one of the most powerful interpreters of character in the range of modern art. I have mentioned some of his leading contemporaries abroad. Is there one of them who has surpassed Saint-Gaudens in the celebration of national themes? I know. Dubois did his glorious "Jeanne d'Arc." Rodin produced more than one impressive evocation before he was betrayed by his own facility, and indulged in modelling for its own sake. There are many fine portraits in France, where every great man has his bronze or marble. But neither there nor in England has there appeared a sculptor who could quite match the record of Saint-Gaudens in this matter of embodying representative types in monuments. His "Puritan," at Springfield, is an eloquent realization of one of our old stalwarts. In his own epoch he not only portrayed statesmen, divines, philanthropists, and others with unerring sympathy, so that his effigies have distinctive vitality, but with unique fulness and variety set his mark upon what I may call the plastic history of the Civil War. His two Lincolns, one seated and the other standing, are extraordinary performances, both as characterizations and as proofs that our prosaic costume need not stand in the way of sculpturesque beauty. The "Farragut," the "Sherman," and the "Shaw" honor

the fighting services as memorably. It is an enkindling thought that this son of foreign-born parents should have struck such potential roots deep down into his own soil, that he should have made for the explication and enrichment of American annals some of their noblest monuments.

They sprang from the creative passion of the sculptor as such, from fingers that simply had to touch clay, from ceaseless, whole-hearted toil. They sprang also from a penetrating imagination. I have encountered, sometimes, observers who thought that they had exhausted appraisal of Saint-Gaudens when they had recognized his manual finesse in bronzes like the relief portraits, and had paid a certain meed of respect to the war memorials. But I've noticed that they have taken another tone when referred to the Adams monument, that majestic symbol of grief which defies analysis. Saint-Gaudens had his limitations, no doubt. But in the Adams monument he soared superbly into the highest regions of the sculptor's art. To the feeling for life and thought which had moved him to true insight when he built up a "Lincoln" or a "Sherman" there was added the poetic divination which sets a great spiritual conception free, and the great bronze at Washington came into existence, new, beautiful, and, as thousands have testified, indescribably thrilling. Saint-Gaudens was my friend and so, I suppose, I must temper what I have to say of this masterpiece. He was an American and

one must be modest in alluding to a fellow countryman. What nonsense! The Adams monument *is* a masterpiece. The Memorial at Cornish *is* the shrine of a master. Let Americans make pilgrimage there and ask themselves if this is not true.

XXIX

EDWARD McCARTAN

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EDWARD MCCARTAN

One of the most conspicuous sculptural decorations ever erected in New York City takes the shape of a gigantic clock, carved in limestone and lifted sixty feet above the ground on the north façade of the towering New York Central Building in Park Avenue. The dial is about thirteen feet high. The reclining figures supporting it, "Transportation" on one side and "Industry" on the other, are nearly four times the size of life. A few symbolical accessories are introduced into the composition, but this, which has its imaginative quality, is above all things a decorative unit of line and mass. It is a beautiful piece of sculpture, curiously delicate in feeling, in grace, despite its portentous bulk. The thing is, in fact, perfect in scale, exactly adjusted to its background, altogether a distinguished achievement in the field where architecture and plastic art harmoniously meet. I may appropriately say something here about the artist who produced the work, Edward McCartan.

He was born in Albany, in 1879, and appears to have gravitated toward sculpture from his earliest years. He began to draw, instinctively, in childhood, and by the time he was ten years old he had modelled

in clay the figure of a lion. All through the period of his schooling these preoccupations continued and he was still in his teens when he came down to Brooklyn to embark upon his profession, entering Pratt Institute to study under Herbert Adams. An interlude ensued of brief employment in business, and then followed further training at the hands of George Gray Barnard and Hermon MacNeil, at the Art Students' League, which prepared him for three years in Paris. Injalbert was his master at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but I gather that his attendance at this institution was of an intermittent character, hardly more important to him than constant visits to the Louvre and contact with antique and Renaissance sculpture. McCartan's French experience coincided with the resounding period in Rodin's vogue, and he shared in the prevailing enthusiasm for that master. He recalls especially the interest with which he observed the development of their patinas upon "Le Penseur" and "Les Bourgeois de Calais," placed out in the open to weather near his own studio. But there is no trace of Rodin's influence in his work.

It was back in Paris, around 1908, that he made the first sketch for "The Kiss," a marble of a mother and her child that stands in the Albright Gallery at Buffalo. But the modelling of this was not resumed until long afterward, the completion of the thing being postponed to 1924. Indeed, he seems to have proceeded with great deliberation upon his career,

designing a few pieces of his own on returning to America but earning a livelihood as helper in more than one studio. None of our sculptors has evolved his art out of a more comprehensive practical experience. Under Karl Bitter he was busily occupied in the big studios at Hoboken where the endless mass of stuff for the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo was developed. He spent his time not modelling but "pointing up." Working later for Adams and MacNeil he got deeper into the mysteries of technique. All this made him a seasoned craftsman, so that he can make a cast, chisel stone, do any of the tasks that fall to a sculptor's lot.

In this earlier formative time there slowly ripened in McCartan's imagination the conception of sculpture which had been growing in him from the beginning, fostered by long hours in contemplation of the fountains and other open-air statuary at Versailles. He had arrived then at the conviction that sculpture, as he saw it and felt impelled to make it, would be sculpture enveloped, allied with its background and environment, a thing essentially decorative. He learned to distinguish between the "museum piece," the sculpture standing as it were in a vacuum, and the "garden piece," the sculpture fit to bear the test of close scrutiny but above all things functioning as an episode in a living world. The distinction is important, as every exacting observer of garden sculpture knows. Some bronzes, admirable in themselves

as works of modelling, look when placed out-of-doors as though they really belonged in the house. McCartan struck the right note with a kind of clairvoyant touch. I have not seen his first production, a "Pan" for a garden at White Plains, but I well remember the "Spirit of the Woods," which came next, the dancing nymph balancing a baby in her outstretched hands which has a lovely setting to-day in the Harold Pratt garden at Glen Cove. I came upon it in an exhibition which may or may not have placed some greenery about the statue. I know that it immediately seemed to create its own natural surroundings, to evoke a sense of sylvan beauty, intimate and free. The thing had *élan*. This sculptor, who thinks of form less as the embodiment of an idea than as a decorative pattern, had nevertheless given his figure an animating principle and in its lithe young movement made it the very image of woodland grace and magic.

Chronology carries us not long after the foregoing statue to an interesting parting of the ways. We are confronted by two salient works, a "Nymph and Satyr," which takes us from the blithe naturalism of the "Spirit of the Woods" to a sophisticated, intensely decorative mood akin to that of Clodion, and an essay in pretty sentiment, the "Eugene Field Memorial" for Lincoln Park, at Chicago. The latter is a considerable monument. The hovering fairy is about seven feet high, looking down upon the chil-

dren grouped against a granite base. It is clever, picturesque, and, if you like, exactly the right thing in the right place, a conception breathing the sweet airs of childhood, illustrative of Field's genius—a true memorial. But as sculpture it seems to me almost irrelevant in the story of McCartan's progress. All that is characteristic of him in it is the polished workmanship and a certain lightness of touch. Otherwise it is a conventional performance, and particularly does it disclose in its sentimental aspect a motive outside his real range. The parting of the ways was to prove, for him, a matter of no dubiety whatever. He made his choice and it was on the side of that *métier* which the "Nymph and Satyr" proclaims. That foreshadowed the specific path he was to take and to which he was to adhere in successive works such as the "Girl with Goat," the "Boy with Panther," the "Diana," the "Artemis," the "Isoult."

How is it that the works named just now may be said to prefigure a successful design in the decoration for the New York Central Building? In the first place, through the evidence they afford that McCartan is a thoroughly able and original sculptor. The two merits are peculiarly intertwined in his case. I have spoken of his rigorous discipline in respect to technical research. There has gone with it a singularly penetrating study of form. His figures are organic, realized from within. They are decorative, but they have the vitality of life. And to this genu-

ineness of theirs I would ascribe a good deal of that originality to which I have alluded. McCartan has been too busy interrogating the actualities of form to permit anything like a "derivative" quality to creep into his work. He has profited by the museums. It has aided him to study Greek sculpture and the art of Michael Angelo. Clodion is not the only eighteenth-century Frenchman of whom I think when I look at the American's compositions. I think, in fact, of the whole delightful school, that did so much to implant a light, graceful type of plastic art, in so many decorative episodes, indoors and out, in the French social scene a century and more ago. Sometimes the atmosphere of Houdon in particular seems revived by McCartan. It is impossible to avoid recollection of it in the presence of the "Diana," for example. Yet that very work leaves the sculptor's essential originality unchallenged. It is a matter not of an old formula renewed but of independent expression in a kindred language. I would call McCartan not a conscious disciple of the eighteenth century but one of its spiritual descendants.

He is a child of Houdon, say, simply in that it is natural to him to compose in terms of an animated mundane elegance and to stress in his figures the precious quality of line. The "Diana" is perhaps his outstanding triumph in this regard. Its contours have a delectably pure and flowing linear distinction. How spare and refined the lovely figure is! It is delightful,

DIANA

FROM THE SCULPTURE BY EDWARD McCARTAN

as you apprehend it, to reflect upon the artist's escapes during his pupilage in Paris. He had no traffic with either the earthy power of Falguière or the supersensitive virtuosity of Rodin, but went wide of the pitfalls concealed by both. The exquisiteness of feeling which characterizes the "Diana" is carried over, rather, into some such fine dry light as we associate with the more academic works of Houdon. Just as the spirit of the thing is purged of merely sensuous elements, so the ideal of form set forth, and the technical mode that defines it, are chastened, clarified, given a certain keenness and elevation.

Three factors count in the achievement of this lucid, high-bred effect. There is felicity of design. Observe the pattern made of figure and animal not only in the "Diana" but in all the other groups. Then there is the circumstance that these sculptures, though usually modest in scale, have been somehow seen, primarily, "in the large." The "Nymph and Satyr" was projected as a statue seven feet high, in stone. Go to the Metropolitan Museum, where the "Diana" stands in bronze, and you will find that it is hardly more than two feet high. But the artist has also put it into a bronze of nearly seven feet for a Greenwich garden, and, while this has required a rehandling of some of the modulations of form, the design, as such, has submitted easily to the transposition. In composition and in scale he is true to the simple clarity which makes him, to my mind, a faintly Houdonesque sculptor.

But the thing that clinches the point is the third of the special ingredients I have in mind, the ingredient of style. I use the word not in the customary sense, implying a specifically personal attribute, but rather in that broad connotation which brings many artists of varying idiosyncrasies into a kind of alliance. That slender, supple, poised "Diana," the vivacious "Girl with Goat," the serene "Isoult," have the style of a *gaillard* carriage, of a distinguished gesture, style as it is manifested in the flourish of a flawless act or in the finish of a perfect epigram.

The "Isoult," a six-foot bronze, as the embodiment of an idea sprang from a romantic source. McCartan got his heroine out of Maurice Hewlett's "Forest Lovers." But it is not quite as a romanticist that he has rounded out this work of art. The colorful theme is in some sort sifted through the warm tapestry of the enchanting tale, and, if not precisely de-personalized, is at any rate simplified until it takes on an almost classical reticence. Remark the synthesizing of the maiden's hair, and the similarly generalizing touch in the treatment of the fawn. Throughout, the sculptor makes you feel his reserve, his selective taste, that same handling of form, I repeat, which belongs to the cool, calculating, fastidious Houdon. It is upon just such refined, rarefied work that the benison of style descends. This distinction of style is what gathers together and validates all of McCartan's traits as a sculptor.

It makes him an arresting figure in American art. There never can be too warm a welcome for work that, like his, interprets gracious, delicately imaginative motives and envelops them in what I may call the nobility of a great plastic tradition. He is American, yes, but as I have endeavored to show, there functions again in him the urbanely decorative purpose which has adorned not only eighteenth-century France but other places in other times. He makes sculpture, as it has been made in the historic episodes from Tanagra down, small in scale, part and parcel of a choice background, pleasing to the eye, and, even more than that, in a thoroughly sophisticated way lovable. It goes happily into a luxurious *milieu.* I recall one of his pieces raised against a tapestried background in a stately hall. It made a fascinating incident, falling into its place in a truly brilliant manner. But these statues pass, by a kind of predestination, into a garden. There, in a green space, they seem most fittingly to live their life of measured movement and linear beauty. I am told that McCartan finds difficulty in inventing titles for them, as though such poetry as is in his bronzes—and they have poetic charm—were something subordinate to his aim. It is an appropriate anecdote, pointing to the artist in him pure and simple. He is nothing if not the absorbed weaver of decorative plastic patterns.

XXX

A GROUP OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS

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A GROUP OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS

THERE died on one of his many European journeys, a man whose passing marked the closing of what I may call, in a very special sense, a personal chapter in the history of American architecture. This was William Rutherford Mead, who on June 20, 1928, went to join his old partners, Charles F. McKim and Stanford White. What a fellowship was theirs! The firm they founded still endures. The name of McKim, Mead and White is still proudly upheld by successors who are stanchly dedicated to the tradition it connotes. But the founders are to be remembered peculiarly for themselves. When I went to the meeting that was held in memory of Mead by the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, it was by three arresting presences that my imagination was touched, invisible yet to the inner eye extraordinarily vivid. I knew all those men, from my youth up, through many years, and often, when I read or hear talk of the unique architectural progress of America, my thoughts go gratefully back to them. "Let us now praise famous men." Is the admonition of Ecclesiasticus ever inapposite? To me it seems as if I could never too often renew my tribute of affection and admiration for the unforgettable three.

They were all born well before the Civil War—Mead in Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1846, McKim in Isabella Furnace, Pennsylvania, in 1847, and White in New York City, in 1853. I mention the war because it makes a kind of dividing line between the old régime and the new in American art. The reconstruction period ushered in our golden age in painting and sculpture, and architecture, too, was swept into the current of advancement. I must outline rapidly the preparation that the three had for taking a constructive part in our renaissance. McKim had a brief initiation into the craft under Russell Sturgis, went to Paris in 1867, and was at home again three years later. He then had some experience with H. H. Richardson, at work at the moment on the designs for Trinity Church, in Boston. Mead also, after McKim, was in the office of Sturgis, proceeded to Italy in 1871, and, without Ecole training, was nevertheless an assiduous student of his subject. In 1872 he and McKim came together and formed a partnership. White, meanwhile, had been hesitating as to whether he should become a painter or an architect. John La Farge once told me how the young man came to him for advice and how he had urged him to abandon the brush. White heeded him and in 1872 began work as a draughtsman in Richardson's office, where—by predestination, as it seems to me—he struck up a friendship with McKim. Subsequently he, like Mead, had his period of free-lancing travel abroad. In 1880

WILLIAM RUTHERFORD MEAD, CHARLES FOLLEN MCKIM, STANFORD WHITE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

he entered into formal alliance with the two who had been, in a sense, waiting for him.

Nothing less than an auspiciously foreordained fate could have been responsible for that perfect harmonization of talents. Each had something to give that the others needed. McKim was the scholar of the group, a self-contained, reserved being, with something about him of the polished man of the world, occasionally caustic, always penetrating, a type of genius fused with reason. White was sheer flame, headlong and exuberant, one of those prolific designers who seem like forces of nature let loose. He was, besides, as endearing as a boy, a very prince of friends, a man whose generous enthusiasm diffused not only stimulus but happiness. Mead, with his clear New England judgment and his equable, silvery temperament, was the indispensable stabilizer, tempering McKim's severity on the one hand and checking White's romanticism on the other. Then they had—up to his death in 1890—a precious coadjutor in another New Englander, Joseph M. Wells, who had been through the Paris mill but had settled down to the conviction that Bramante was the consummate architect. He was to have entered the partnership when his death intervened, as is shown by this passage from a letter written by McKim to White in December, 1889: "For my own part I would hail his accession as a partner with delight. I feel more every day the obligations of the office to him. To my mind he stands alone in the pro-

fession for thoroughness and scholarly ability, and I feel sure that you value the soundness of his judgment in composition as much as I do." Wells, like the writer of those feeling words, was a genius. Is it any wonder that the firm worked miracles, back there in the '80's? Talk about your "nests of singing birds"! The *atelier* on the top floor of 57 Broadway, corner of Tin Pot Alley, made one great hive of eager workers, throbbing with inspiration.

The teamwork that went on there embraced not architecture alone. All the artists who tended toward leadership in that period drifted in and out, especially through the play of White's glorious *camaraderie*. I was there and I can see them still, La Farge, Saint-Gaudens, Thayer, Warner, Bunce, Blum, Weir, a perfect host. It was the rallying ground of gifted men. I speak of White's faculty for friendship, of the warm, beautiful way he had of winning fellow artists to his side. It had tremendous force, it did much to create an invigorating atmosphere. But as I recall the time and the place one thing stands out above the whole diverse medley of personalities and styles. That *atelier* was the seat of a supreme artistic rectitude. The important thing was just to make a work of art beautiful. The unpardonable sin was the sin against good taste. Every one was mad about making the best that could possibly be made of the given task. Every one had a burning artistic conscience. There were, of course, other centres for the promotion of a high ideal.

Richard M. Hunt was back from Paris, developing his French ideas with magnificent power, and Richardson, as I have indicated, was already well launched upon his ample, richly colored, emotionally fervid Romanesque campaign. But if I ascribe a certain singularity to what was potent at No. 57 it is not by any means out of any private prejudice that I write but because, as events have clearly shown, McKim, Mead, and White proved the prime renovators of American architecture. They spoke in the language which was somehow best attuned to the needs and tendencies of the situation confronting them. The needs were great.

Let the reader revive for a moment, from memory or from such illustrative material as he has seen, a picture of the country as it was, architecturally, not only just after the war but into the '80's and '90's. In New York City, for example, the brownstone front reigned supreme and where business dominated it was proud of a pseudo-classical façade, in cast iron, which was equally unlovely. In the environs and all over the American countryside, for that matter, Queen Anne atrocities evenly prevailed. The new firm played a leading part in changing all this. White had lingered over the old French manor farms, with their swelling towers; he had a passion for the picturesque, too, but McKim and Mead—with Wells, also—were there to use moderating voices, and when a country house emerged from under the hands of the company there was about it, among other things, a beautiful simplicity. I wish

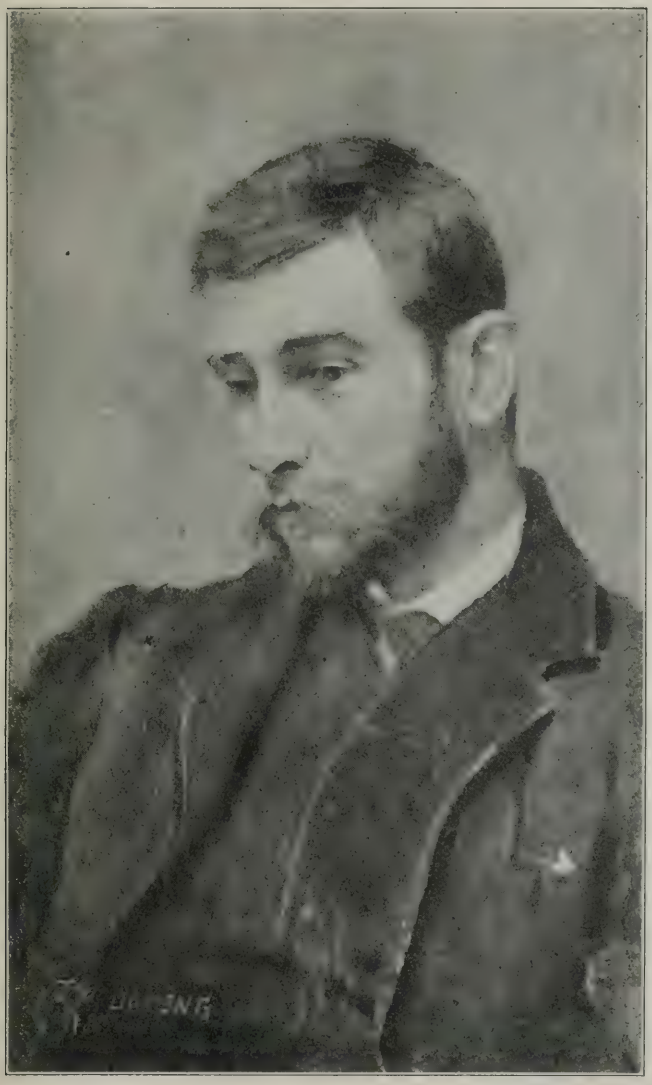
I could exhibit in my pages one after another of those numerous designs, the modest yet somehow stately "cottage" for Robert Goelet at Newport, the lordlier stone affair for Charles J. Osborne at Mamaroneck, the Colonial house for H. A. C. Taylor at Newport, and so on through a long list. I don't mean to say that they were all howling masterpieces, that they were flawless inside and out. But I do mean to say that they were new, original, and distinguished buildings, that to this day they do not "date," but possess a quiet, refined, dignified quality that is essentially durable. They worked a revolution in the field of architecture to which they belonged. Again I must touch upon the matter of singularity, which these houses markedly illustrated. Richardson did some handsome country houses in New England. But I do not believe it could be asserted that they had quite the influence that was exerted by the works of his New York juniors—and rivals. The turning of the tide in country-house design may fairly be dated, I think, from the Goelet cottage, which belongs to 1883.

It was the same with urban architecture. Let the reader consider the J. Coleman Drayton house, now gone the way of so many private residences in Fifth Avenue. Intrinsically it was a skilful solution of the problem imposed by a narrow site, the design, as a design, was good to look upon, and the use of brick and stone likewise reflected taste, and struck a new note. But think of it merely as a substitute for

the brownstone front aforesaid. It is the difference between art and dead formula. Then carry the investigation further and recall another lost building, the bank once at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. In stone, brick, and terra-cotta the firm here erected a kind of modest skyscraper which replaced the ancient hideous type so characteristic of the city with the delicate grace of a Florentine *palazzo*. Once more I venture to emphasize the germinal nature of what McKim, Mead, and White were doing forty years ago. They were breaking new soil, disseminating new ideas, erecting new standards. Were they introducing a new style? Hardly. They were great eclectics, with one sharply defined trend in their following of tradition. The bank building just mentioned was obviously Italianate. Wells had a good deal to do with that element in their practice. I remember that when I used shamelessly to neglect my duties in order to talk Beethoven and Wagner, Byron and Thackeray with him in his room, I would find him with his eyes dreamily fastened upon a big photograph of the courtyard of the Cancelleria. The works of Bramante constituted his Bible. You can see some rich fruits of his meditations in the mouldings, the windows, the balconies and the cornice of the monumental composition in Madison Avenue, just back of the Cathedral, which embraces the Whitelaw Reid residence and several others in one grand unity. Wells was the master of

the exquisite detail in that work. There was never anybody like him for detail. But I must mention at this point one building for which, as a whole, he was solely responsible, the Russell and Erwin Building at New Britain. It is beautifully composed, a model of right proportions, an instance of "commercial architecture" raised to a higher power. This design gives one a sharp sense of what we lost when Wells died. He died untimely if ever a man did. But his influence did not die with him. All through his association with the others he counted in their development, fostering their instinct for Italian forms, and his spirit carried on in their subsequent activities.

A narrow interpretation of this traditional instinct in the firm and their not infrequent close adherence to some specific historical precedent, would assign to them a conventional rôle, the dogged continuation of what had gone before. But they showed even in those early works in which they were feeling their way, and on which I have deliberately paused, a vital power which fitted them for a pioneering, constructive function. The firm could help to make American architecture over because, as a firm, it had not only learning but the fresh, energizing force of genius, and because, as I love to insist, it drove at beauty with a fairly fiery gusto. How, save on terms of genius and beauty in architecture, are you to account for things like the vast room



Joseph M. Wells

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY T. W. DEWING

in the Pennsylvania Terminal, the Tiffany Building, the University Club, the Russek Building (formerly the Gorham Building), or the Morgan Library? Traditional idioms are used in them all but with a freedom, a fervor, and an independent judgment making the respective structures I have named so many pieces of living architecture. There was an enkindling virtue in what they did and it is a testimony to the fundamental vitality of their art that the men they trained, who learned their language, nevertheless went forth upon their own careers to use speech of their own, men like Henry Bacon, Thomas Hastings, Cass Gilbert, Harrie T. Lindeberg, Philip Sawyer, Edward York, Louis Ayres, H. Van Buren Magonigle, John Galen Howard, and, indeed, so many more that I despair of cataloguing them all in this place. It is not too much to say that the work begun so long ago at 57 Broadway has flowered anew in the work of hundreds. The benefit that it has also conferred upon public taste is past measurement.

The firm has its countless monuments, all over the country, to fertilize indefinitely the wide-spread movement in architectural design and appreciation which is recognized throughout the world as one of the signal phenomena in American civilization. But its tradition is conserved also by an institution on which I must pause in bringing these reflections to a close, the American Academy in Rome. By coin-

cidence my own thoughts synchronized with its beginnings. In Rome, one summer, back in the nineties, I sat under Tasso's oak on the Janiculum and mused on the idea of an American Academy by the Tiber. I called on the directors of the different institutions of that nature in Rome and asked them what they thought of it, judging from what their own countrymen had found in Italy. They were all enthusiastic and I duly reported the circumstance in a magazine article. But I thought, to tell the truth, that *that* dream could hardly come true. It nearly took me off my feet to learn, when I got back in the autumn, that McKim had already founded his Fellowship in Architecture at Columbia, out of which action the American School of Architecture in Rome and then the American Academy in Rome were ultimately to grow. Thenceforth I wrote much upon the subject, having frequent consultations with McKim, and from him I learned the purpose of that fabric which has since proved invaluable to many an American painter, sculptor, and architect. McKim's idea in founding the Academy was not to make any of our young artists crass disciples of the old Italian masters, to set them at mechanical emulation. It was to take the American of demonstrated ability and subject him to the ennobling pressure of classical and renaissance influences, to enrich his imagination, to stimulate his sense of beauty. Above all to help him toward a realization of what is fine

in the arts, of how far they may be made to soar. On a memorable day I strolled in the Villa Doria with McKim and he sank into revery on an antique fountain rim, giving himself up to the plash of waters, the warmth of the sun, the pure enchantment of an Italian garden. Often have his words come back to me. "How beautiful it is," he murmured, "how beautiful it is!" It was as though he spoke in renewal of an ancient pledge, the pledge of an inviolable loyalty. He spoke in the key of No. 57, in the key of that devotion which united him and his colleagues in an ardent labor, itself beautiful. In 1929 a tablet with a fountain was erected at the Academy in his memory, from a design by his old colleague, William Mitchell Kendall, the present senior member of the firm. It speaks of McKim's "life-long and unselfish public service for the cause of the arts in his native land." The same epitaph might be inscribed for White, for Mead, for Wells. Together they rendered a great public service. Together they served the cause of beauty.

XXXI

THE AMERICAN COLLECTOR

I. HIS DEVELOPMENT IN FIFTY YEARS

II. THE BRITISH TRADITION IN THE HUNTINGTON COLLECTION

III. THE ITALIAN TRADITION IN THE MACKAY COLLECTION

XXXI

THE AMERICAN COLLECTOR

I

HIS DEVELOPMENT IN FIFTY YEARS

When I went to London to see the great loan exhibition of Flemish art to which extended reference is made elsewhere in this volume, I felt a special interest in the pictures sent over by American collectors. There were nearly twenty of them and they came well into the foreground of the assemblage of some eight hundred pieces at Burlington House. In one corner of the first gallery there were three of the finest of Van der Weyden's portraits, Secretary Mellon's "Portrait of a Lady," the "Portrait of an Elderly Woman" owned by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Col. Friedsam's "Lionello d'Este." Mr. Henry Goldman lent a marvellous "Adoration" by Petrus Christus and a brilliant Rubens. From Mr. J. Horace Harding came two masterly portraits by Antonio Moro. But I need not lengthen the list. I have cited paintings enough to show how important was American participation. It was widely appreciated in England. But for an American it had a peculiar significance. It revived the whole subject of the art collector in this country and marked an epoch in the

establishment of his status. The sending of that group of masterpieces from the United States would have been unthinkable fifty years ago. In so short a time has American connoisseurship been invented and developed.

There is a certain type of mind which will not admit that there is any such thing as American connoisseurship. It announces, with a flourish, that to the native millionaire the costly work of art is only a form of financial investment. This is a singularly fallacious view of the matter. Doubtless the purchasers of rare art treasures are aware of their material value. As intelligent people they could hardly ignore the point. But if there is one thing more than another that impresses the thoughtful observer of our proceedings in the world of art during the last half-century it is the distinctly educational evolution that has marked the period. It simply can't be financial acumen that accounts for the various stages achieved. One must recognize rather the swift development of such elements as enthusiasm and taste. I venture to say that nothing quite like it has ever occurred anywhere else in the world. It is as though a transformation had been brought about overnight. There are men collecting European Primitives whose fathers—to say nothing of their grandfathers—were content with the most banal of modern anecdotic sentimentalities.

The American art collector began a generation or

two ago with the saccharine pictures of the Dusseldorf school. From these he was graduated to the more adroitly painted subjects of the Paris Salon, bits of domestic genre, military episodes, all manner of "stories" cleverly set forth. Then the very dealers who fostered the cult for these hollow prettinesses began to supply better things. It was an artist, William Morris Hunt, who first put ideas about the Barbizon school into the air over here. But it was due to the enterprise of dealers like Avery, Schaus, the Knoedlers and Daniel Cottier that the works of that school presently drifted into American homes. With Barbizon, I believe, our artistic regeneration began. Its romantic naturalism and its deep sincerity rapidly displaced the meretricious modes of the Salon. From that moment the American art collector functioned with a new ardor and a new judgment. He passed from the Barbizon group to Monet and the other impressionists and thence he went on to the old masters. With the latter he got occasionally into deep waters. It has been reported from time to time that he has made a mistake. Really? Well, why not? It was Dr. Bode who bought the famous "Wax Bust" for Berlin, that masterpiece by Leonardo that turned out to be of modern English origin. But there is a wholesome lesson to be learned from that incident. As some wit has neatly put it, every connoisseur has his "Wax Bust" waiting for him just around the corner. There is no such thing as infallibility in these

matters. Collectors have been making mistakes from the earliest days.

Sometimes, to be sure, somebody commits an almost unbelievable howler. I like the story told me by my friend Ffoulkes, the master of tapestry lore, not long before his death. In Paris one day he ran across an American whom we will call Mr. X., a valiant competitor in the art market. There was a vast tapestry available for $50,000. Would Ffoulkes come and look at it and give his advice? He looked and advised its immediate purchase. The thing was, in fact, a bargain. Mr. X. hesitated and in the upshot let the bargain go. It was too expensive. Two or three years later Ffoulkes met him again in New York and this time was asked to come and admire two tapestries which Mr. X. had considered cheap at $100,000, cheerfully buying them for that amount. Ffoulkes thought so, too. Only he was a little surprised that Mr. X. hadn't noticed that the pair consisted, actually, of the original Paris bargain, cut in two and bordered! Probably comedies like this could be matched in the United States, and in England, and in France, and in Germany. Every collector, it may be repeated, has his "Wax Bust" waiting for him just around the corner. But to look at the other side of the medal in this country is to be struck by the extraordinary sanity and good fortune attending the steps of the art collector.

They have been steps in experience. Fashion has

had some slight influence in the matter. It was a fashion, some years ago, to assemble old portraits for their purely decorative value in the hall or elsewhere about the house. That fad was one of the forerunners of what I may call the Ecole de Park Avenue in interior decoration. But as a fad it passed and portraits were collected on more serious grounds. What pure adventurers in æsthetic experience some of our collectors have been! Consider one of the first and most accomplished of them, the late Henry G. Marquand. He took advice, no doubt, especially from discriminating artists. But he had flair, the love for the fine thing. How otherwise could he have bought the great Vermeer at the Metropolitan Museum which is at the very peak of the Delft master's art? And there was the late John G. Johnson, of Philadelphia. I used to go down to him now and then on Sundays, for luncheon, and, after that, long talks among his beautiful possessions. In everything that he said there vibrated his consciousness of their beauty. He was a delightful human being.

In all my impressions of American collectors the human, sympathetic strain remains indelible. Pierpont Morgan amid the priceless things in his London house was a kind of colossus of *virtu*. He had everything. You could turn from the famous Fragonard room to the enchanting full-length of Nellie Farren in which the young Thomas Lawrence was the merely consummate master, to be obliterated in his later,

more popular period. When Mr. Morgan was not collecting an incomparable group of eighteenth-century mezzotints he was acquiring heavenly drawings by the old masters, or he was buying that portrait of Giovanna Tournabuoni which is perhaps the most bewitching thing Ghirlandajo ever painted. Dr. Bode was strong on the fact that this collector was "not an expert." What of it? I remember him handling the extraordinary cabinetful of miniatures which he had accumulated. No "expert" could have loved them more. There was Freer, too, the late Charles L. Freer, who left behind him the noble museum bearing his name in Washington and the beautiful works of art it enshrines. He would let me know when he had a new batch of old paintings from China and show them to me one by one. He did so with the joyous excitement of a boy. My last image of him dates from a day near his death, when I sat by his bedside and watched his eager face against the pillows. He would send for a great piece of jade or a Chinese drawing and hold the miracle of art in his hands as he glowed over it. How silly it is to talk of the American collector as a man "making an investment" when men like Freer have left their mark upon the subject!

What explodes that fallacy, indeed, once and for all, is the disposition which the American collector so often makes of his belongings. Marquand left his masterpieces to the Metropolitan Museum. Altman

did the same thing. The Frick collection is a public possession, to which ultimately the whole world will be admitted. Archer Huntington has made the Hispanic Museum a sanctuary for Spanish art. Do you want to see Velasquez painting one of his great court portraits or an intimate study of a lovely type? Go to the Hispanic and look at the "Olivares" and the "Infanta."

These transplantations to American soil have steadily increased in number. The imagination is fairly staggered by the multitude of great pictures that have migrated from the other side of the Atlantic to our shores, repeating the movement which once carried so many immortal works from the Continent to Great Britain. I can remember the excitement when Schaus brought over Rembrandt's "Gilder." Now we receive so many of the "star" pictures from the famous collections abroad that these visitations, if I may so describe them, are taken almost as a matter of course. And they are of tremendous import to the student, little by little exposing to his eyes an extraordinary range of the art of the past, adding immeasurably to his knowledge and giving him ineffably happy moments.

For that, I take it, is what is implicit in the whole romantic business. To prate of the prudent financial motives which may or may not sway the collector is to vulgarize a noble theme. Johnson once told me of a call he had made a day or two before on Altman,

who wanted his opinion and advice on a great painting just offered to him. "They ask me a terrible price," the merchant said, with a rueful smile, "but I suppose I'll have to pay it." Of course he had to pay it. He couldn't help himself. He was in the clutch of a great passion. What makes me believe in that passion is just the evolutionary process to which I have alluded, the growth of the American collector from the puerilities of Dusseldorf to the splendor of the Renaissance in Italy, the power and beauty of the seventeenth century in Holland and Spain, the early efflorescence of Flanders and the eighteenth-century elegance of France and England. He has travelled with incredible celerity from the tenth-rate to the best, and to-day, as the Flemish exhibition in London showed, he is abreast of the private collectors of England and the Continent.

What has urged him on? What lies at the bottom of the cult for the antique in our modern America, whether it be a drawing by Michael Angelo, a painting by Raphael, an etching by Rembrandt, an anonymous Greek marble or a painting or bronze from the East? I think it is the irresistible power of beauty. I remember talking with a collector who told me what happened when he went home from business after a hectic day, thoroughly tired out. He sat down before a portrait by Lorenzo di Credi and fatigue fell from him like a garment. Beauty is like that. Like sleep it knits up the ravelled sleave of care. Only it is a

matter of intense consciousness, of delight as tangible as the refreshment that comes with a cup of cold water on a burning day. I like to go back to all those Flemish Primitives in London that were sent across the sea from New York. They seem to me so many eloquent ambassadors, telling of the status of art in our American civilization. In fifty years that has taken on an extraordinary meaning. It signifies many things, no doubt, as, for example, material prosperity, and the civic pride that finds expression in the erection of museums all over the country and constant gifts to them. But it signifies most of all the increased power of beauty as a factor in our national life. For, as I have shown, the private collector is exercising more and more a public influence.

II

THE BRITISH TRADITION IN THE HUNTINGTON COLLECTION

Where shall the student go when he wishes to come in contact with really representative examples of the eighteenth-century British painters? "To England," would seem to be the obvious reply and it would hold, no doubt, if the student were to have the run of certain private collections. But how otherwise he would fare may be judged from certain passages in Sir Walter Armstrong's little book in the "Ars Una" series:

Reynolds is not well represented in our public galleries.

It is impossible to reach a complete idea of Gainsborough's powers from our public collections.

Romney has been still less fortunate than Reynolds and Gainsborough in his fight for publicity. Scarcely any picture showing him quite at his best has won its way into a national collection.

Hoppner has been even more unlucky than Ramsay in failing to make his proper entry into the nation's collections. No idea of his powers can be formed from the National or the Portrait Gallery, and he is almost entirely absent from the provincial museums.

With regard to the national collections, the same unhappy story has to be told about Lawrence as about so many other English masters. He is quite inadequately represented in our public museums.

Of course these drastic statements have to be received with certain reservations, for the national collections in England are not utterly devoid of examples of the historic leaders just cited. But that these examples are not of what I might call the canonical order remains emphatically true, so as I revert to the question asked at the outset I offer another reply. It is that instead of going to London the student should travel in exactly the opposite direction, and examine the collection formed by the late Henry E. Huntington at Pasadena, in California. There he will find in unique fulness a true representation of the British tradition. There are only about forty

canvases in the group, but they are uniformly of astonishing quality.

The collection is unique, as I have already remarked, in more senses than one. For one thing it was brought together in comparatively few years. At the foot of each description in the catalogue runs the legend "Acquired from Sir Joseph Duveen," and that redoubtable individual would appear to have achieved something like a *tour-de-force* in his service to Mr. Huntington. Ransacking the private collections of Great Britain he literally stopped at nothing. From the Duke of Westminster, for example, in 1921, he bought Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" and Sir Joshua's "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse." They had seemed immovable monuments in a nation's artistic patrimony. Now they dwell on the Pacific Coast! These two renowned masterpieces, surrounded by others of the same school, establish within our borders, in something like splendor, one of the world's most imposing memorials to the painters of an epoch. Unique? It is, to my mind, one of the most piquant episodes in the history of connoisseurship. Mr. Huntington was in love with the eighteenth-century British painters, and having resolved to assemble them under his roof he adopted the highest standard and steadfastly adhered to it. It must have amused him as he meditated amongst his treasures to realize that no historian of the subject could forego the long journey to California. There

in very truth he had recreated one of the seats of artistic tradition.

What is tradition? I have ventured to define it before as simply the tribute which the genuine artist pays to the wisdom of the finer spirits in the art of all ages. There is nothing of academic formula about it, there is nothing in it to obstruct the artist's free expression of himself. It is in this sense that the eighteenth-century British masters embody tradition. The Royal Academy was there but it imposed no routine upon the particular practitioners we have now to consider, and even though you may trace some nominally conventional strains in them the genius pervading them is in no wise academic, but in each case remains essentially personal. They bear the stamp of a period. They mirror a fashion. They use more or less a common denominator of design. But they enforce the everlasting truth that an artist is known by the individual ability and quality he puts into his work. A point of view is not necessarily a formula. From it an artist, though he may stand on a ground common to others, may use his own vision, and his craftsmanship, too, will reveal only the pressure of his own inviolable hand.

Let us touch first upon this matter of the point of view. For a long time in the history of British portrait-painting it is closely allied with the carriage and demeanor of the royal court. The raciest earthiness of the Georgian epoch could not dislocate the

gait of the aristocracy when it was on parade before the painters. And the latter, in the epoch of Mr. Huntington's masters, were not only vividly conscious of that gait but had in the back of their minds a peculiar sensitiveness to what Van Dyck had done in his registration of it. In the sixth of his Discourses Reynolds alludes to "the place which Van Dyck, all things considered, so justly holds as the first of portrait-painters." Tacit repetitions of this judgment recur again and again in the master's pages. His view permeated all the studios. There was danger in it, to be sure, one phase of which Reynolds himself thus touches upon:

> The great variety of excellent portraits with which Van Dyck has enriched this nation, we are not content to admire for their real excellence, but extend our approbation even to the dress which happened to be the fashion of that age. We all very well remember how common it was a few years ago for portraits to be drawn in this fantastic dress; and this custom is not yet entirely laid aside. By this means it must be acknowledged very ordinary pictures acquired something of the air and effect of the works of Van Dyck, and appeared, therefore, at first sight to be better pictures than they really were.

The fragment points to the peril of superficial emulation, but I cite this chiefly to underline the fact that the eighteenth-century British masters escaped it. Costume counted with them, counted enormously,

but it was the costume of their age and it happened to be intrinsically effective. What they received from Van Dyck was not a pattern of dress but a fillip to mood and taste. In carrying on his tradition they carried on just his elegance and stateliness, and they adjusted the key to their own time. Incidentally each painter tinctured a portrait with his own idiosyncrasy.

This is notably so in the case of Reynolds. The powers of *ordonnance* in him which smack so much of the academy were really an inborn part of him. The grand style was in his blood, as the man's whole history clearly shows, and his Italian travels, with an instinctively studious habit of mind, only confirmed in him a predestined impulse. Mr. Huntington's leading specimen, the "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse," was never painted by an academician with a formula but by an observer of nature. She was wont to say that she had fixed the attitude herself, and this is borne out by the easy felicity of the composition. What Sir Joshua did was by the sinewy force of his touch to lift the whole thing to a higher power. Mrs. Siddons adopted the pose in response to his request to "graciously bestow upon me some idea of the Tragic Muse." But we may be sure that it was his genius that pulled the whole fabric together. It has been said that the portrait is reminiscent of the Isaiah on the Sistine Chapel, and that Reynolds would never have painted it just as it is if Michael Angelo hadn't

painted before him. Perhaps. But I go back to my conception of tradition. It is with no sacrifice of originality that Sir Joshua pays tribute to Michael Angelo. It was from his own inner sense of things that he drew the majestic grace, the unity of design, which are his salient contributions to an era. It is this personal distinction of his that shines forth from all the ten paintings from his brush in the Huntington collection. It is hard to say which is the more striking in the "Diana, Viscountess Crosbie," the gracious movement of the figure or the serene balance of the design. The artist sees his subject steadily and sees it whole, as a bit of nature and as a work of art. So it is again in the almost dramatically imposing "Jane, Countess of Harrington," in the classical "Mrs. Edwin Lascelles," and in that incomparable "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," which is classical, too, and at the same time romantically intimate. There are Sir Joshuas in the collection, like the exquisite profile of the little girl, "The Honorable Teresa Parker," which are intensely modern in their fresh spontaneity. But the master was most himself when he was painting in the formal vein of his period, not dashing off a study but building up a court portrait. He is the great constructive type of his school, and in that rôle in Pasadena he is superb.

Gainsborough, I imagine, could have bent Reynolds's bow in the matter of pondered composition if he had chosen, but he hadn't the same weighty tem-

perament. It was his gift to be lyrical and light in hand, to respond to nature as whole-heartedly as Sir Joshua, but to give her even greater freedom. There is a pair of full-lengths by him in the Huntington collection which holds the secret of his art as in a parable. In one member of the pair, "Edward, Second Viscount Ligonier," is portrayed standing beside his horse. He is "posed" and so is the animal, but a certain subtle naturalism pervades the group, and when you turn to the full-length of his wife you find that in spite of the pedestal and statue beside which she stands, and the billowing drapery in the background, it is with a fairly unstudied, artless stroke that Gainsborough evokes her lovely presence. Beside the august quality of Reynolds he seems the pure improvisatore. He can make a composition with the best of them, as witness the brilliant portrait of the Court Musician, Charles Frederick Abel, but its sound structure is somehow lightened by the careless animation of life itself. Gainsborough is the happy virtuoso in this gallery, as he was indeed in the London of his time. In temperament he is a very different man from the robust moralizing Hogarth, but he is akin to that master in what I may call the gusto of technique. Like Hogarth in "The Shrimp Girl" he uses the brush as though it were a magic wand. What, after all, is "The Blue Boy" if not, technically, a prodigious *tour-de-force?* The story that he painted the picture in defiance of Sir Joshua's dictum on the

subject of blue was long ago exploded but this portrait, nevertheless, owes much to nothing more or less than a conjuror's skill in showing what he could audaciously do with the tools of his trade. There are nine Gainsboroughs in the Huntington collection to balance Sir Joshua's ten portraits, and in this instance also the examples are superlative. Besides the Ligonier pair and "The Blue Boy" the group contains some of the most ravishing portraits of women that Gainsborough ever painted, the "Juliana, Lady Petre," the tenderly blithe "Mrs. Mears," and that wonderful "Mrs. Henry Beaufoy" which with its romantic background touches the imagination like some sylvan idyll. Gainsborough was the virtuoso, yes, when he painted Mrs. Beaufoy but he was a poet, too, as sensitive in feeling as he was in brushwork. There was a kind of gracious emotion in him. When he painted "The Cottage Door," the sole landscape of his in the collection, he gave us not only a transcript of the truth but a thing of enchanting beauty. Reynolds at Pasadena has more grandeur, but Gainsborough beats him in sheer flashing beguilement.

Romney, who is numerically a shade stronger than either of them, in his turn makes as personal an appeal. When he is stately, as in the full-lengths of "Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Milles," he is somewhat colder than Sir Joshua. He savors a little more obviously of artifice. He is not so powerful a type.

Neither has he Gainsborough's dexterity, his glancing, gleaming touch. He has, on the other hand, great linear ability, and while he does not make drapery as noble as Reynolds makes it or as shimmeringly delightful as it is in the hands of Gainsborough he treats it with remarkable adroitness. His special note as it comes out in the Huntington canvases is the note of sentiment, of charm. If there is a weakness anywhere in the eighteenth-century English school, a weakness half suggesting that academic dryness from which I have maintained that the masters are in essence free, it discloses itself in respect to the physiognomies. The typical face in a portrait of that period is not very rich in character. But if there is not pronounced character there is always a certain witchery in a head by Romney. When I think of his "Mrs. Ralph Willett" in the Huntington collection, or the "Mrs. Penelope Lee Acton," or "The Beckford Children," or the two different studies of "Lady Hamilton," or the "Mrs. Francis Burton," I think of so many images of delicate beauty, made that much more delicate and alluring by their envelopment in Romney's spirit.

There are two captivating Hoppners in the gallery, one a great full-length of "Mrs. Bedford and her Son," the other a bust portrait of "Lady Beauchamp" in which the very fragrance of his art seems to reside. There are three thoroughly representative Lawrences, including that glittering "Pinkie," which

in technical bravura is rivalled only by the same painter's "Miss Farren" in the Morgan collection. A good Raeburn is present, and there are two fine pictures by Turner and Constable. On the Constable, "A View on the Stour, near Dedham," I am tempted to pause. It is a glorious landscape, one of his masterpieces. But it is not for landscape art that our hypothetical student will turn to the Huntington collection. He will turn to that collection for the tradition of eighteenth-century British portraiture in its purest estate. In the contemplation of it he will drink deep draughts of pleasure, and if he happens to be a portrait-painter himself he will derive also substantial profit from the encounter. A noble tradition never dies. It is a living, continuing force. There are elements in the portraits at which I have glanced which must always be inspiring, elements of dignity in design, honesty in the construction of form, purity and distinction in line, taste in color and serenity in spirit. The Huntington Collection recalls us, in short, to some of the stanchest virtues in the art of painting. That is why, for my own part, I doubly value the generosity of the man who formed it and left it to the public.

III

THE ITALIAN TRADITION IN THE MACKAY COLLECTION

THE distinctive character of this collection springs from its origin in a peculiarly constructive connoisseur-

ship. From the beginning Clarence Mackay has had certain clearly defined enthusiasms and tastes, has known what he was driving at, and has followed fixed lines of development in the beautiful fabric which Stanford White designed for him high up on Harbor Hill, at Roslyn, Long Island. The house is French externally and in plan, taking its cue as to style from that celebrated Château de Maisons-Lafitte which has been called the *chef-d'œuvre* of François Mansart. But the seventeenth-century precedent was simplified by the modern architect. Nobly proportioned and bearing very sparse decoration, the façades have a kind of grave elegance. They lift their surfaces of cool gray stone above a sylvan scene, save where formal terraces lead to a picturesque circular fountain and a glorious long *tapis vert.* Just beyond the turf and raised upon their pedestals against the blue—"ramp the White Horses of Marly." A stroke of sculptural bravura thus marks the termination of a great architectural ensemble, one in which house and garden, gleaming water and episodical statuary, trellised roses and other lovely flowers, blend in an unmistakable unity.

I would stress this unity because it is what Mr. Mackay has steadily pursued and, I think, has achieved with phenomenal success. Though I approach his collection in these pages with a particular interest in the pictures it contains, I cannot forbear glancing at the character of Harbor Hill as a whole. Across the threshold one steps into a corridor that runs almost the

length of the house. Crossing it the visitor finds himself in a vast central hall or chamber of lordly dimensions, with a ceiling more than thirty feet high. Gothic tapestries enrich the walls. Against them are ranged some of the most famous suits of mediæval armor in the world, interspersed with detached pieces, swords and other weapons. Here and there occur rare examples of Italian sculpture and furniture. Just below the ceiling hang multicolored historic banners. Vast, shadowy and splendid, the whole room breathes of history, as it does of consummate art and craftsmanship. Color is everywhere, in the rosy glow of the Chaumont tapestries, in those faintly moving banners, and in scattered incidents of ruby velvet. And the marvellous thing is the manner in which the myriad objects here assembled from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance all "pull together," making one superb effect and creating one harmonious atmosphere. It is an atmosphere of beauty. It was an axiom of Stanford White's that the work of any period would go with the work of any other period—if both were of superlative quality. Mr. Mackay has worked on the same conviction, maintaining the high standard which validates it. There is, for example, a little gem of a room at the end of the corridor aforesaid, a Gothic room with ancient *boiserie* and stained glass, and a renowned group of marble *pleurants* sending the imagination straight back to the heroic tombs of Philippe le Hardi and Jean sans Peur at Dijon, in the heart of the old Burgundian

tradition. It is in a distinctly individualized key. But it is, in its beauty, akin to the broad character of the great central hall, and the same glamour envelops the stately Renaissance room in which most of the pictures are housed. There, as in the recent addition to the building which contains the Sassettas, some more armor and divers other treasures, one is conscious of the unity to which I have referred, of an organized purpose seeking for perfection in the specific object and in the grand alliance of all the objects together. Exacting taste tells in every detail of arrangement, even to the placing of a bowl of yellow roses before just the sculpture that invites its presence. This collector has not only specialized in architecture, painting, sculpture, tapestry and furniture but has specialized in so fusing them as to produce a collection in itself a work of art.

The artistic genius of Renaissance Italy is illustrated at Harbor Hill with a range and a distinction giving the collection a fairly unique status. I know of no other similar representation of the school in private hands. Elsewhere there are, of course, various resplendent pieces. Mr. Widener has the incomparable Bellini-Titian "Bacchanale" and Mantegna's "Judith." The Mantuan master's "Tarquin and the Sibyl," one of the most imposing things he ever painted, is in the Emery collection at the Cincinnati Museum. Mr. Pierpont Morgan has the bewitching "Giovanna Tornabuoni" of Ghirlandajo, an ineffable

souvenir of Florentine portraiture. There are masterpieces by Titian, Signorelli, Crivelli and others in the collection of Mr. Jules Bache. I might, indeed, make a long list of the great Italian paintings which have come to this country since economic conditions released them from European custody. But nowhere, here or abroad, has the Italian tradition been commemorated quite as it has been commemorated by Mr. Mackay, in a group so choice, maintained on such a high level. I never recall the Dreyfus collection of Italian sculpture in Paris without a thrill, but not even that rare body could outshine the assemblage at Harbor Hill that embraces Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, Desiderio da Settignano, Rossellino, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio, Benedetto da Majano and Mino da Fiesole. I find it hard to relinquish the plastic theme but I must pass to the paintings, which stand as conspicuously for the collector's judgment—and his good fortune.

For Clarence Mackay has obtained some almost unbelievable prizes in the field of the picture collector. I can well remember the time when outside the Jarves collection at Yale and Mr. Johnson's house in Philadelphia the Italian tradition was practically unknown on this side of the water. When once cultivation of it got under way there were a few lucky buyers like Mr. Altman in New York and Mrs. Gardner in Boston. But Mr. Mackay's luck has been unsurpassed in respect to the rarity, beauty and condition of his ex-

amples. There were nine of them on the walls when Dr. Valentiner's catalogue was printed in 1926 and of the nine each had the full-rounded integrity of a pearl. Two of them were secular in subject, portraits by Pisanello and Botticelli. The first of these is eloquent of that good fortune touched upon just now. Pisanello is primarily a medallist and the tale of his paintings is soon exhausted. If twenty-five years ago any one had told me that a new panel by the painter of the picture in the National Gallery might come into view I would have been more amused than edified. But in due course the "Portrait of a Young Princess" did turn up, in Paris, and presently arrived at Harbor Hill. I love its naïve charm as a portrait and its pure, linear accent. The Botticelli "Portrait of a Young Man," much later in date, nevertheless preserves a good deal of the same early freshness and beauty—with more sheer genius in it. It is, again, a magical thing in the matter of draughtsmanship, only Botticelli's line is more fluid, more animated, fuller of life and grace, especially in the definition of the hair and the lad's entrancing hand. Berenson has said of this portrait that "it is more 'Botticellian' than any other Botticelli in existence." There is so much of the painter's personality in it, so much of the essence of his art, that the critic wonders what remains of the sitter. "Very little," he adds, "I confess." That is one way of saying that the painting is all compact of pictorial beauty. With these two works I find myself irresistibly

associating Mantegna's "Adoration of the Shepherds," so long held in obscurity in England. I place it beside the others from some sense of the singularity which, like them, it possesses. I have made a devoted study of Mantegna and have seen, I fancy, every work of his that exists. In the entire mass I recall no other painting which so joins as this one does his marmoreal feeling for form and drapery to a kind of patient, Venetian realism and an overwhelming devotional poignancy. Other designs by him have more grandeur and, by the same token, more of pure force. This one stands by itself for a certain almost artless religious lyrism. He was never nearer to the truth of human life and the visible world than in the "Adoration" and he was never more the poet.

Of the remaining Madonnas that Valentiner catalogued, those by Baldovinetti, Verrocchio, Matteo di Giovanni, Francia and Perugino, all are beautiful, but the first two I have named are, to my mind, the most distinguished and inspiring. The Baldovinetti is fifteenth-century Florentine devotional painting in what I would call its most personal estate. All the masters in that golden period were sensitive and exalted. Baldovinetti, like a Piero della Francesca or a Botticelli, has a hauntingly individual note, filling out a familiar formula with a gentle, wistful touch made only the more appealing through the sober charm of his color. I remember feeling his special quality—which I would call piercing if there were not

something about it very delicate, very poetic—when I first saw the fine example of him in the Louvre. I feel it even more in the example at Harbor Hill. The Verrocchio is fifteenth-century Florentine painting in all its might and majesty. Where Baldovinetti gets at your heart-strings softly and, as it were, unobtrusively, Verrocchio, with his ringing colors and his strong forms, takes you by storm, obviously the puissant sculptor handling the brush as vigorously as though it were a chisel. I linger over the two persistently, unwilling to leave them even for the melting emotionalism of Francia and Perugino, or the mingling of Peruginesque sweetness with a greater master's traits in the little Raphael that Mr. Mackay owns, the "Agony in the Garden." This was once part of the *predella* of that big altar-piece given to the Metropolitan by the late J. Pierpont Morgan. It belonged, in other words, to something like an architectural whole. Even seen by itself it reveals the artist's genius for design, and, with it, his capacity for spiritual rapture.

In recent years the Mackay collection has been strengthened by as many paintings as were in it when the catalogue was made. A remarkable addition is to be cited in the field of portraiture. The Pisanello and the Botticelli are now accompanied by a Crivelli, notable, like the former, for its extreme rarity. The fifteenth-century Venetian is famous for his pictures of the Madonna and the Saints. None of the lists con-

tain any reference to a portrait. Mr. Mackay's "Portrait of a Man," brought to light, I believe in a German collection, is exactly what one would have expected of the painter if he did stray into the sphere of mundane subjects. The hand and the profile denote his grasp upon bony structure. The vivid coloration and the treatment of the costume are significant of his decorative habit. A powerful, sumptuous thing, it strikes a happy note in the trio I have indicated as now existing in portraiture at Harbor Hill. Another Venetian acquisition is the "St. Jerome" of Giovanni Bellini, formerly in the Benson collection, in London, which was bought *en bloc* by Sir Joseph Duveen and brought to this country in 1927. It is one of the most purely exquisite of the Mackay pictures. A figure of serene old age, made sufficiently impressive, the Saint counts in it hardly as much as the rocky landscape, with animals and flowers in the middle distance, and, beyond, a little hill town looking out upon the sea. There is a kindred landscape of Bellini's in the Frick collection, a beautiful "St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata." It has the familiar stony stratifications which Bellini and Mantegna painted with such loving care. But, by coincidence, this "St. Jerome" has something of the same special character which I have ventured to assign to the "Adoration of the Shepherds." The scene is realized with the meticulous accuracy of a geologist and in the same moment Bellini functions as a poet. He dwells upon the nuances of

color in earth and sky. Like some monkish miniaturist, caressing his illumination, he turns his picture into a prayer to beauty, making his jewel-like tints to gleam with a spiritual fire. And he is, withal, touching, intimate. There is grandeur in the Frick "St. Francis." The "St. Jerome" is in a more human and endearing category. This picture and the Mantegna are the two sacred pastorals in the Mackay collection. In the Bellini, as in the other, nature breaks through the crust of design and brings with it something that is half fragrance, half music. Therein lies the soul of Renaissance painting, the interpretation of the things of this world by the spell of an imponderable, holy beauty. You find it in still another comparatively recent addition to the collection which revives the earlier Venetian tradition, a majestic "Madonna" by Antonello da Messina, who came out of Sicily to travel in Flanders, interest himself in the oil medium developed by the Van Eycks, and ultimately create a great stir in Venice. He has his intensely realistic aspect, which was only strengthened by his contact with the precise craftsmanship of the Flemish school. You feel it in the solidity of this "Madonna," in the pure, exact draughtsmanship, in its luminous color and in the vitality throbbing in the strong, pyramidal design. But the close student of nature, so familiar to students through his portraits, like the famous "Condottiere" in the Louvre, was also a religious painter having profound sensibility and this is mag-

nificently proclaimed in the "Madonna" at Harbor Hill. Form and color are endued with the fires of exalted feeling.

It is a motive affirmed nowhere in the collection more penetratingly than in the works to which I now turn, the works of the Sienese school. The little panel by Duccio, "The Calling of Peter and Andrew," is one of the monuments in the history of art. This great *trecento* master was a pioneer so potent that, in Vasari's phrase, "he deserved to carry off the palm from those who came many years after him." In 1308, he embarked upon a prodigious scheme for the Cathedral at Siena, a huge Gothic *ancona* to be painted on both sides. Enthroned in the centre of this "Majesty," as it was called, he placed the Blessed Virgin and in the many subdivisions of the altar-piece he set forth the story of her life and that of the life of Christ. Of the fourteen *predella* pieces four were detached by some chance of fate and ultimately found their way into the Benson collection aforementioned. It is said that while they were there the authorities of the Louvre cast covetous eyes upon them, to the exclusion of all else, and the Benson collection was packed with priceless things. The Duccios came, instead, to the United States, "The Temptation of Christ" to pass into the Frick Museum; "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" and "The Raising of Lazarus" to be bought by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the one I have already named to find its home at Harbor Hill. Vasari's say-

ing, that Duccio "wrought, as it were, in the Greek manner but blended considerably with the modern," is exactly confirmed by these pictures. It is as though the foreshadower of Sienese efflorescence in art were inspired to breathe a more palpitating life into the old Byzantine tradition. He sets a new energy stirring beneath its wonted immobility, makes his design truer to a realistic impulse and more nobly spacious, and still endues the painting with the sweet, innocent ecstasy of the morning of the Sienese school. "The Calling of Peter and Andrew" illustrates also the lovely purity and radiant force of his color, set against a background of gleaming gold. From the point of view of dramatic narrative the panel seems the least sophisticated thing in the world, yet it has the unified, balanced and greatly dignified effect of a big fresco.

After its calm solemnity come the traits of another Sienese painter, Sassetta, who is represented in the Mackay collection after a fashion to excite, again, the envy of the Louvre. He in his turn painted an altar-piece destined to have its various parts separated by time, an *ancona* for a church at Borgo di San Sepolcro, dedicated to St. Francis. Mr. Berenson has the central panel, in which the Saint "in glory," is portrayed at full length. Episodes in his life fill the series of eight panels which rounded out the decorative plan. One of these is lodged forever at Chantilly but all the rest are at Harbor Hill, six

panels from the Chalandon collection, where they long rested in Paris, and one from that of the Comte de Martel, in the provinces. The subjects are innately picturesque fragments from the Franciscan legend, the Saint renouncing his heritage, the Saint and the wolf of Gubbio, the Saint before the Soldan and before the Pope. In his treatment of them Sassetta, always a straightforward, humanly sympathetic chronicler, carries on with an animation of his own the realistic movement established by Duccio. He is very simple, unaffectedly explicit, almost matter of fact. In the "St. Francis Before the Pope," for example, he is as baldly descriptive as some prose historian. Yet there exhales from this panel and from all the others the invigorating fervor of an authentic passion. He paints prose, yes, but the Franciscan poetry shines through it and carries a deep spiritual conviction. In the "St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata" the limitations of early fifteenth-century convention are clearly marked but how Sassetta transcends them through the intensely emotional nature of his vision! With his landscape and his architecture he opens windows upon the Italy he knew, and with his powers of divination he causes them to look out also upon unearthly scenes. He matches his clairvoyance with his skill as a colorist and draughtsman.

The Mackay collection reverberates in silver tones with the organ music of the ancient church, but, adding enormously to its value and suggestiveness as a

microcosm of the Renaissance, there rises up upon a pedestal a monument to keep one in mind of the complexity of the period. It was a period in which crime and culture went hand in hand, and to be devout did not necessarily stay a man when he was set upon violence. The bust on the pedestal is one of Lorenzo de Medici, fashioned by Verrocchio in terra-cotta. It is a tremendous portrait, the heroically simple style matching the saturnine truculence of the sitter. Lorenzo looks less the patron of the arts than he does the town bully. He is grim, brutal, a very portent of ruthless power. And his bust magnificently illustrates the wizardry of art. As you turn from Lorenzo to Desiderio's fascinating "Bust of a Young Woman," or to the exquisite Mino that used to be taken for a Saint Catherine, but that Doctor Valentiner would designate quite impersonally, or to the ravishing modulations of Rossellino's "Madonna," you see that though they penetrate to an infinitely suaver world they are not more beautiful than Verrocchio's bluntly realistic portrait.

It is the paradox of the Renaissance. Dissecting a soul in confusion, Thomas Hardy says: "Poor Jude did not know whether the breeze blew from Cyprus or from Galilee." The fifteenth-century Italian had no such dubiety. He knew just where the breeze came from—and trimmed his sails to suit his mood. Wherever he found himself he was supremely sincere. Always he drove—even recklessly, on occasion—at

truth. It is Verrocchio's consummate truth that makes him in the bust aforesaid as beguiling as he is startling. That is why the portrait of Lorenzo makes so dramatic an impact upon the imagination, it is so human, so sympathetically vitalized. The paintings in the Mackay collection, whether Madonnas or portraits—the sculptures, whether a touching "Saint John" by Donatello, an electrifying "Young Warrior" by Pollaiuolo, or a proudly prosaic bust of some nameless middle-aged man by Benedetto da Majano —are all instinct with the passion of an historic period, the passion for life, for corporeal as well as spiritual truth. A momentous chapter in the history of art is set forth at Harbor Hill. And not so long ago it could have been studied only in Europe.

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